

ANGLO- SOVIET JOURNAL

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THE ANGLO-SOVIET JOURNAL

September 1968

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Editorial

Editors must come to recognise sooner or later in their attempts to plan the contents of a journal that the vagaries of authors are as humbling as the vagaries of consumers are to economists in attempting to plan an economy. This issue, which was to be one with a science and industry theme, has turned out to be one concerned mainly with literature and the arts. Nevertheless the contributions on science and industry that have been commissioned, promised or proffered are on their way. It is hoped that they will arrive in time for the next issue. Meanwhile it is also to be hoped that those readers who kindly suggested to the editorial board that they would like to have articles in the Journal on science and industry will be patient and other readers will not be deterred by this example from sending in suggestions for subjects to be dealt with in future issues.

The Short Story in Soviet Fiction, 1917 to 1967

COLIN BEARNE

In the last fifty years the short story has come to occupy an increasingly important position in Soviet fiction. While this is a phenomenon which is reflected in the literatures of other countries, it must be said that a series of sociological conditions, themselves an outcome of political events, have arisen which have favoured the development of this genre in the Soviet Union in particular. To gain some impression of what these sociological conditions were, it may be as well to examine significant stages in the development of the short story over these first fifty years of the Soviet regime.

The revolutionary upheavals of 1917 and the prolonged period of civil disturbance, famine, and hardship which followed them, threw the Russian publishing world into chaos. Many established publishing houses were forcibly wound up by the new Government. Others found it impossible to continue in a situation of chronic staff shortage and abysmally low supplies of paper. Against these circumstances must be set the fact that, as a result of the same upheavals, there was a rapidly growing potential reading public. These two factors, and a general easing of the harsh censorship on all fronts which the Tsarist regime had maintained, gave birth to a heterogeneous multitude of often transient, literary and literary historical journals. Both the journals and the readers themselves demanded copy which was brief, succinct, and had immediacy of appeal. This often meant that a novel, which was less likely to possess these qualities, was viewed by an editor with less favour than a short story. The question now arises, what kind of short stories were these? The writers who were now providing copy had experienced deeply the sufferings entailed in the internecine strife of the Revolution, Civil War, and War Communism, and they wanted to present their experiences vividly and realistically. Essentially what they wrote were not short stories if, as an English reader, one thinks of Jack London, Somerset Maugham or Hemingway. The writings of Isaac Babel (1894-1941) and Mikhail Sholokhov (b. 1905), two young men who approached the same subject matter from widely differing angles, and drawing widely diverging conclusions, were often nearer in essence to sketches and come more properly under the Russian heading of "ocherki." Writers of lesser talent were often led into the blind alley of merely graphic reportage. Sholokhov and Babel, however, are the outstanding figures in the field of the short story for these years. Both are writers with a specialist, exotic appeal. This arises mainly from their consciousness of and preoccupation with their own nationality. Sholokhov wrote with great clarity and insight about the Cossacks while Babel was concerned essentially with the problem of the (Jewish) intellectual adapting himself to a violent society. Without the sociological conditions mentioned above, and the acceptability at the time of the genre in which they chose to write, it is even doubtful whether these two men would ever have come to literature.

With the introduction of the New Economic Policy in the early '20s, a period of relative intellectual freedom was established. Intellectual freedom, and the

waywardness of political developments led, almost inexorably, to the growth of social criticism and satire. The short story, already established as the prime vehicle for reaching the mass of the reading public, proved a ready means of expression for writers such as Mikhail Zoshchenko (1895-1958), Il'f (1897-1937) and Petrov (1903-1942).

Zoshchenko's stories of this period show great insight into the workings of the human mind and into the faults of the bureaucratic system of the time. The faults are elaborated through a delicious sense for the humorous situation such as could only be possessed by the splendid raconteur that Zoshchenko was. These stories are moving away from sketches, but are even now too flimsy to satisfy sophisticated modern standards for short stories. They are virtually untranslatable since their narrator character speaks the racy urban slang that one might find in a present-day television comedian. Il'f and Petrov, who are probably better known for the long novels *The Twelve Chairs* and *The Golden Calf*, collaborated also in the production of a number of more intellectual and cleverly constructed anecdotes, which take as their butt the same bureaucracy that Zoshchenko attacked from another angle. Mention should here also be made of Yurii Olesha, (1899-1960) again more properly speaking a novelist, whose rather longer short stories examine not without sardonic humour the perplexity of the individual in the face of mass "progress," and the extermination of the individual imagination.

Such criticisms and lampooning were obviously only possible under the given conditions of intellectual freedom. Sadly this period of freedom was soon to come to an end, and the short story found itself harnessed to perform other tasks.

The end of the New Economic Policy, and the onset of industrialisation and collectivisation of the land, went hand in hand with the promulgation of the literary "policy" of Socialist Realism. There is neither time nor need to discuss here the full implications of Socialist Realism, or even to try to define the possible meaning of the term. Suffice it to say that the policy ultimately had a crushing influence on all literary genres. One of the most obvious long term effects was that the fear of being accused of failure to comply with the dogma of this "policy" led to a decrease in the incentive to write on contemporary themes. This, in its turn, led to writers steering well clear of the short story. What short stories there were from the period of the '30s, from writers such as Ivan Katayev (b. 1902), Boris Gorbатов (1908-1954) and Konstantin Paustovskii (b. 1892), were not amongst the best products even of these writers. Whether from overprudence or lack of craftsmanship, their tone, and sometimes their end effect, were both mawkish and sentimental. The stories dealt often with incidents which showed individuals developing on the path to self-realisation. Although at least one of them, Ivan Katayev, was concerned with the problem of the gulf which separated the older generation of Bolsheviks from those who had been brought up under Soviet rule.

It has subsequently transpired that there were writers engaged, even in this dark period, in producing short stories but who, because of the nature of their subject matter, found it impossible to have their works published. Such a writer was Andrei Platonov (1899-1951). He examined problems which had a purely human connotation, and seem now, and would have seemed then, to have little if anything to do with the class struggle. Platonov's stories, however, were not published in any number until the 1950s.

The situation had worsened to such an extent by the end of the decade preceding the Second World War that many writers, amongst them even such "reliable" persons as Alexei Tolstoi (1883-1945), a prolific writer whose earlier short stories had dealt with a variety of topics from quasi-science fiction to the Petrograd underworld, found that the only safe refuge was the historical novel, and even that was subject to harsh criticism from those who wished to interpret Russian history from a purely Marxist point of view rather than from a purely Russian point of view. The closing years of the 1930's brought the lowest ebb in Russian literature as a whole, not only in the short story. Yet in the three years after 1939 the situation was to alter radically.

Shortly after the outbreak of hostilities between Germany and the Soviet Union in 1941 nearly every writer of any standing had been drafted into service as a War Correspondent. There arose a situation strongly reminiscent of that prevailing in the years of Civil War. Writers needed to report, and the vehicle for reporting was by now obviously the sketch, 'feuilleton,' or short story. The tone of short stories produced by writers in the early years of the conflict reflected the wave of patriotic feeling, partly instigated by the authorities, which swept over the country. Alexei Tolstoi emerged from the mists of the Russian past to present patriotic depictions of the Russian character in battle. As the war progressed and large areas of Soviet territory fell under German occupation, the Government seemed prepared to recognise the need for a certain relaxation of the controls imposed by the rigours of Socialist Realism. In the face of the overwhelming hardships endured by the mass of the population, writers could not resist, and readers wanted to read, discussions of basic human emotions, love, fear, hatred, loyalty, jealousy, and so forth. Perhaps it is to some extent an indication of the talent which had lain dormant in the 1930's that there was now an upsurge of creative activity. Writers such as Konstantin Simonov (b. 1915), Alexander Tvardovskii (b. 1910), Valentin Katayev (b. 1897), Pavel Nilin (b. 1908), Arkadii Gaidar (b. 1904), and Vasily Grossman (b. 1905), created within the framework of well constructed short stories sympathetic portraits of Soviet citizens under the stress of war conditions. As a counter-balance to this it must be said that the humanity of these stories is sometimes so expansive that in the odd case it verges on sentimentality.

As the war in Europe reached a climax, and the Russian armies rolled nearer to Berlin, the feverish activity of the War Correspondents continued to give a great impulse to the genre. The long term effect of the relaxation of literary control as it affected the short story was to establish the genre more firmly than ever as a goal for writers and as an object of interest for the readers. Many young, and previously unheard-of writers came to the fore through the harsh school of service as War Correspondents. This was a position in the Red Army involving considerable personal risk. Allowances were made only for the writers with international reputations: even then some (Petrov) were lost to posterity.

War conditions imposed a salutary sense for editing upon writers and opened up to them new areas of human experience. The short term effect, however, of this stepping back from rigorous observance of the dogma of Socialist Realism was to bring harsher conditions to the post-war literary world. Stalin's phobias and idiosyncrasies, which percolated into the authorities' policy on the Arts, placed ever increasing restrictions on the choice of subject-matter.

Although the short story flourished as strongly as before, the War continuing to provide the bulk of the subject-matter, conflict, an essential quality, had been removed, and the stories often became hymns to the heroism and moral righteousness of the Red Army.

The effects on the literary world of the relaxation of tension after Stalin's death in 1953 cannot be over-estimated. The blossoming forth of the short story since that date could well form a subject for study in itself. The new "liberalism" gave a strong impetus for all branches of the Arts, but to the short story in particular. The writers who now came to the fore were men of a different kind from those mentioned above. With the possible exception of Zoshchenko nearly all the short story writers in the Soviet period up until now had been men whose primary concern, and often whose primary claim to fame, was in another genre, be it the novel, the play, or in poetry. Some, like Sholokhov, may have regarded their essays into the field of short stories merely as an apprenticeship for the long novels of their later years. The last two decades have seen the rise of men who are short story writers in their own right. In the Soviet Union in recent years, as in the West, there has been a drop in the popularity of the long fiction form, the novel. Extended imaginative prose has been abandoned in favour of the non-fictional documentary, biography, or more interestingly for the subject of this discussion, the short story. The reasons for this swing, in both East and West, remain to be examined, and may possibly only ever be explicable in retrospect some twenty or thirty years hence. The weekly or monthly literary or semi-literary journal containing a mixed bag of reporting, literary criticism, social comment, short stories, poems and often one-act plays, has maintained a high level of popularity in the Soviet Union. Indeed, magazines like *Yunost* or *Novy Mir* have often been at the centre of the literary debates of the last twenty years, because of the controversial nature of the young authors whose articles, sketches and short stories they have published.

There is an ever increasing list of names that one should mention at this juncture: Yurii Kazakov (b. 1927), Yurii Nagibin (b. 1920), Vladimir Soloukhin (b. 1924), Vladimir Tendryakov (b. 1923), Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn (b. 1917), Vasilii Aksyonov (b. 1925), Sergei Zalygin (b. 1913) are but a few of the most important. It is interesting to note that almost all of these men came to writing as an after-thought, as it were. Their occupations are many and varied: doctors, veterinary surgeons, geologists, teachers of mathematics, none of them has had a literary training, yet, for all this, they write with an enviable freshness and, in some cases, elegance of style. Their subject-matter is as varied as their backgrounds, yet one common theme, if it can be called that, is immediately discernible. The larger issues of life in the Soviet Union, war and peace, the class struggle, ideological tendencies, are, if not ignored, then taken for granted. The theme which all the writers have in common is a burning interest in the lives of ordinary people, in the study of basic human emotions in the Russians around them. Nagibin writes of the contrast between town and country, of a human being's 'responsibility' to the countryside, to the world around him, while Kazakov writes of those poignant moments of tension in human relationships, of the individual's search for something with which to identify himself. The stylist of those that I have mentioned is undoubtedly Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, who, in the few short stories that he has written, has employed a richness and elegance in choice of word and phrase which seems

to have been lacking in Soviet prose, with some notable exceptions, almost since the Revolution itself. Indeed, the political interest aroused in the West by his book *One day in the life of Ivan Denisovich* has not placed his writings in a just perspective.

Despite the varied fortunes of the literary world under Malenkov, Khrushchev and the present régime, social criticism and satire have reappeared, represented in the writings of Tendryakov and Zalygin. The spokesman for the younger generation, that section of Soviet youth which realises that it stands on the frontier of a new world, and must find some standards by which to live, is Vasilii Aksyonov.

Some general, although rather unsatisfactory remarks, can be made to sum up the mood of the stories of the last twenty years. Many of the authors have obviously been greatly influenced by the writings of Ernest Hemingway, whose reputation in post-Stalin Russia has been extraordinarily high. From him the younger writers have often inherited a succinctness, brevity and deliberate laconicism which makes one think involuntarily of one other source of their inspiration, the early stories of Anton Chekhov. There seems also to be something 'Chekhovian' in their attitude to nature. In a writer such as Vladimir Soloukhin, for example, one finds lyrical description of the Russian countryside, description carried out with relish and with pride in one's native country. This is no longer the unsubstantiated pride that one often found in the patriotic stories of the early War years, but a warm love of the small details in the natural landscape.

Finally mention must be made of the extraordinary popularity in the last five years of the science-fiction short story. Soviet science-fiction is a branch of literature which critics in the past have either ignored or relegated to a secondary position. Soviet science-fiction, and in particular, the splendidly effective and in no way sensational short stories which have appeared in recent years, has a serious claim to a position on a par with other forms of literature.

It will be seen from this brief and wholly inadequate survey how far the short story has succeeded in gaining a prominent position in Soviet letters. It has passed from being a method for transmitting immediate response to war and suffering to a wide-ranging and all-embracing vehicle for expression. Its progress has doubtless been aided by many of the factors which have affected literature equally in the West, namely the rapid growth of the mass media, the influence of the cinema, and cinematograph techniques. The influence of these latter factors has led to a great deal of experimentation within the genre. Only the future can tell what effects will be wrought upon the short story by the even more rapid growth of the mass media in the Soviet Union.

Trends in Soviet Novels

DENNIS OGDEN

During recent years British publishers have produced a steady flow of translations of Soviet authors and it is possible for the reader who knows no Russian to gain access in any well-stocked public library to a reasonably representative picture of the main trends in current Soviet writing.

Soviet literature, despite the persistence of many unresolved problems, is a vigorous vital force, presenting an immense and growing readership with new novels, short stories, poetry and plays on a wide variety of themes and in a rich variety of styles.

The war, in which the Soviet people suffered so terribly, understandably remains a major theme. No "War and Peace" of World War Two has yet been written but the bitter experience of those years is being distilled in a growing number of significant works.

Some of these were written during and immediately after the war. Simonov's *Days and Nights*, Grossman's *For a Just Cause*, Bek's *Volokolamsky Chausse*, and Polevoi's *Story of a Real Man* are some of the best known. The most significant books on this theme have, however, appeared since 1956, after the Twentieth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party and the denunciation of what is usually (though inadequately) called "the Stalin personality cult."

The majority of these, and some of the best of them, deal with the most difficult period of the war—the months between the Nazi invasion in June 1941, to the Battle of Stalingrad, which ended in late January and early February 1943. The triumphant period of the war that followed has not so far been so well covered.

A deeper examination of the earlier period was made possible by the political changes which followed the death of Stalin and the Twentieth Congress. In May 1945, Stalin had said that "our government made not a few errors, we experienced at moments a desperate situation in 1941-42, when our army was retreating, because there was no other way out." But in the following year he seemed to suggest in a letter to a military historian that the Germans had been deliberately lured into Russia in order that they should be destroyed. It is not surprising that a closer examination of the lessons of 1941-42 should have been made in the period after 1956 when it became possible to do it.

Konstantin Simonov's panoramic novel, *Zhiviye i Myortviye*, published here under the title of *Victims and Heroes*, is an outstanding example. It depicts the chaos and confusion, the courage and the cowardice; it asks why the Soviet Union was unprepared; it poses the problem of the atmosphere of suspicion and distrust fostered during the Stalin cult. *Victims and Heroes* ends with the Battle of Moscow; its sequel, *Soldatami ne Rozhdayutsya* (Soldiers are not Born) culminates in the victory of Stalingrad. There is unfortunately no complete English translation.

The problems of the early period of the war have been discussed frankly in works of fiction published in the late '50s and early '60s, but it is an indication of the contradictory currents flowing in Soviet Society that Simonov's wartime memoirs, covering the same period and presumably touching upon the same problems, were last year withdrawn from publication in *Novy Mir*.

His novels, which form part of a cycle embracing the period from the mid 1930's to the mid 1940's, are in the grand tradition of the long Russian novel, but in recent years there has been a growth in the popularity of the shorter novel.

Younger writers are using this form to deal with many different themes. On the war theme, one of the best is Grigory Baklanov's *Pyad Zemli*, published in English under the title *The Foothold*. Soviet critics have compared this excellent novel to Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* and it is one of the comparatively few set in the final, victorious days of the war. In contrast to

Simonov's wide-ranging presentation, it depicts only a small group of men engaged in a very brief and strategically insignificant operation.

Anatoly Kuznetsov used another new form, the documentary novel, in his *Babi Yar*. This is a story of the Nazi occupation of Kiev as seen through the eyes of a 12-year-old lad, using extracts from newspapers, posters and other contemporary material.

The consequences, both personal and social, of the Stalin cult have served as a second major theme in the writing of the post 1956 years. This is a theme rich in tragedy, drama and heroism. Western publishers have seized on some of the many novels on this theme which have been published in the Soviet Union, and some which have not, in order to present them to the English reader with an air of sensation and propaganda rather than out of consideration for their literary merit.

The best known of these is perhaps *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*, by the very gifted writer Alexander Solzhenitsyn. There are others of equal significance, such as *Silence* by the young writer Yuri Bondaryev, and a novel by a writer of the older generation, Viktor Nekrassov, called *Kira*, which is also available in English translation.

One of the first and most wide-ranging examinations of this theme from the point of view of not only individuals but also of the country's economic development, is the late Galina Nikolayeva's long novel, *The Battle on the Way*, which has curiously never been fully translated into English. It begins with an account of Stalin's funeral, and is the only Soviet novel, as far as I know, which includes a fictional presentation of a meeting of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party.

Although these and other similar books have been published in the Soviet Union, it is odd that Lydia Chukovskaya's poignant novel about the purges of the 1930s, as seen through the eyes of a mother whose son is arrested (published here under the title *The Deserted House*), should not have found a Soviet publisher.

There are a number of books which do not deal directly with the personality cult but examine some of its related problems, such as bureaucracy, personal responsibility and expediency. Pavel Nilin's *Ispytatelny Srok* is a good example (published here under the title *Comrade Venka*). It deals with issues which are very relevant today although it is set in the years immediately after the Revolution.

The issues of morality and human relationships form the theme of the short stories of such writers as Vladimir Tendryakov and Yuri Kazakov. Both are as yet comparatively little known to English readers, but such examples of their stories as Tendryakov's *Ruts* and Kazakov's *At the Railway Halt* are to be found in anthologies and in parallel Russian-English texts published for language students. These writers and others like Yuri Nagabin deserve to be better known here.

These are writers of the younger generation who frequently deal with the problems of young people. A picture of student youth, which it is only fair to say has been much criticised by some Soviet critics, may be found by the English reader in two books by Vasily Aksyonov, *The Starry Ticket* and *The Colleagues*. The very attractive young characters in these books are sophisticated in the best sense of the word, and combine an intelligent scepticism with a pleasing romanticism.

One theme of modern Soviet writing which is not well represented as yet in English translations is that of rural life. A feature of recent writing in this field has been the down-to-earth presentation of the realities of life in the countryside, with the effects of bureaucracy and authoritarianism sharply exposed. Ivan Stadnyuk's *People are not Angels*, for example, tells of the consequences of too hasty collectivisation. Another book by Solzhenitsyn, *Matrona's House*, gives a deeply moving picture of the stoicism, dignity and sense of purpose of Russian country folk.

Unfortunately many outstanding examples of this kind of writing remain untranslated. They include Sergie Zalygin's *On the Irtysh*, Boris Mozhayev's *From the Life of Fyodor Kuzkin* and Vasily Byelov's *A Matter of Habit*.

The theme of the "new men"—the scientists and technicians—is treated in two books by Daniel Granin, issued in translation by Progress Publishers of Moscow, under the titles *The Seekers* and *Into the Storm*. The latter is particularly interesting with its theme of meteorological research and its portrayal of a variety of situations akin to those depicted, for example, in some of the novels of C. P. Snow.

Satire and fantasy are also not yet well represented in translation. Valentin Katayev's *The Holy Well* has, however, recently appeared, and Fazil Iskander's *The Goat-Ibex Constellation* is, I understand, soon to appear. Fazil Iskander, who is an Abkhazian from the shores of the Black Sea, represents the non-Russian literatures which are as yet completely unknown to English readers. Three of his stories recently received the accolade of a review in *The Times Literary Supplement* without even having been translated.

Finally, lest it should be thought that translation of Russian prose writing is confined to the highest levels of literary endeavour, mention should also be made of an excellent Soviet thriller, Julian Semyonov's *Petrovka 38*, which is available in English.

Gorky in Britain

(Notes from a Special Correspondent, arranged by C. E. Simmonds)

Gorky only came to London once, when he met Lenin at the Fifth Congress of the RSDP in 1907. But he knew our literature, and was interested in the element of social criticism at the end of the nineteenth century (a 'surprising' and yet 'natural' phenomenon, as he remarked in a letter to Chukovsky praising Shaw and Wilde). He met Bernard Shaw and H. G. Wells. The English critic, Ossia Trilling, claimed that he learnt from them; a Russian would no doubt consider that there was plenty nearer home to set him on the path of social protest.

How well do we know Gorky here? His major works reached Britain soon after publication. His first work to appear in England was the short story *Twenty-six Men and a Girl*, which appeared in translation in 1902. *Mother* came out in 1907, and the three volumes of autobiography in 1915, 1917 and 1924. Volumes of short stories appeared in 1939 (praised by Desmond McCarthy) and in 1953. His biography of Chaliapin was published early this year. The Pudovkin film of *Mother* made an impact in the thirties, and the film trilogy by Mark Donskoy (Childhood, Apprenticeship, My Universities), first seen

here in 1942, became a popular film classic, and was fittingly revived by the National Film Theatre in their programme commemorating the fiftieth Anniversary of the USSR.

As a dramatist, Gorky is best known for his play 'Lower Depths,' which has been produced at least ten times. It was first produced in England in 1903 only a year after its first production at the Moscow Arts Theatre.

This was a club performance by the State Society at the Royal Court Theatre on 29th and 30th November. The translation was done by Henry Irving's son Laurence, and this translation was used at the first public performance on 2nd December, 1911, at the Great Queen Street Theatre (now the Kingsway). It was produced by actress-producer Lydia Yavorska. On 10th July, 1934, the OHEL players from Tel-Aviv performed 'Lower Depths' in Hebrew at the Scala Theatre. Robert Mitchell's production from the Glasgow Citizens Theatre came to Unity Theatre in 1945. It was revived at the same theatre in 1961, and the *New Statesman* wrote: 'It is certainly a noble play and it has noble followers. You can track O'Casey and O'Neill in this Russian show, and at Unity Theatre it is given a fascinating production by Levcho Zdravchevo. This young Bulgarian creates stage spasms that an English producer would not dare to do.' A year later the Arts Theatre produced 'Lower Depths' in a new translation by Derek Marlowe. It was performed on BBC TV in 1958, and last year it was broadcast twice on radio in the translation by David Magarshack, adapted by Bennett Maxwell. 'Yegor Bulichev' was produced at Unity Theatre in 1965, and in Manchester last year as part of a 50th Anniversary Arts Festival.

Gorky's three great volumes of autobiography all appeared here in translation within a year or two of publication. Fourteen of Gorky's works are available here, some in elaborate bindings, some inexpensively produced, Cambridge University Press has issued a special school edition of *Childhood*, and Oxford University Press has published it in its 'World Classic' series. In the Preface to this, C. P. Snow says of Gorky: 'He spoke for his time, particularly the time of the long prelude to the October Revolution, as no other prose writer did. It is impossible to understand the texture of that pre-revolutionary life in Russia unless one knows his works. That is enough achievement for any one man. But he was much more than that. He was the epic poet of the Russian poor, just at the point when that poor was going to take history by the scruff of the neck. No one has ever written about the poor as Gorky did, either before or since.' In his article in *The Times* on 2nd March, in honour of Gorky's centenary, McDonald gives pride of place to his memoirs, ranking them alongside the other great Russian autobiographies such as those of Aksakov, Tolstoy and Kropotkin, and, in our own day, Paustovsky. He says: 'In Gorky's memoirs every word tells, everything has vitality, meaning, the quality of surprise. . . . He brought a new class—the poor townspeople—on to the national stage, he exposed their misery and helped to make them conscious of it and of the need to change it.' Of a new translation of the trilogy in 1953 (Elek Books) Edwin Muir wrote: 'The book breathes enchantment, for Gorky is a great artist with a wonderful eye and an infallible ear . . . Gorky endured great hardship, suffered cruel injustice and witnessed unspeakable beastliness, yet the book is filled with sweetness and humanity.'

Although Gorky is known and loved in Britain, he has to some extent been overshadowed by his great contemporary Chekhov. The tremendous vogue

for Chekhov during the last twenty years reflects a recognition on the part of the British bourgeoisie that the social climate which Chekhov portrayed is also part of their experience. Not all have yet been ready to respond to the sharper, stronger message of Gorky. As more illusions crumble and the ugliness of the contemporary scene is driven home, more will respond to Gorky's message

Gorky has always had a faithful public in Britain. When he asked people from every country to record what they were doing on 27th September, 1935, and send it to him, masses of material poured into the Embassy in London. He died before he could write the monumental work for which he needed these records. His reputation has weathered the anti-Soviet storms that blew through the pages of the British Press after the Revolution and at the height of the Cold War.

Requiem

ROBERT ROZHDESTVENSKY

(translated by Walter May)

(The following note on Rozhdestvensky has been adapted from *Soviet Poets*.) He is often associated with Yevtushenko. Both were born in 1932, and grew up beyond the Urals (Yevtushenko in Siberia and Rozhdestvensky in the Altai Mountains). They both studied at the Moscow Institute of Literature and modelled their earlier writings on Mayakovsky's poetry. Rozhdestvensky addressed his poems to large audiences and they convey the impression of a loud, harsh voice, expressed in common language with the ringing, brassy notes of a slogan call. He is an enemy of philistinism and a poet of practical action, energy and motion. His first major poem, *My Love*, written in 1955, held up self-satisfied and lazy philistines to biting satire. The collection of poems, under the title *Trials*, published in 1956, expressed the optimism of youth, with a confidence to withstand all trials and to remake the world. His collection of poems, *A Drifting Avenue*, published in 1959, resulted from a visit to a polar exploration station. The poem *Requiem*, the translation of which is given below, was written in 1961, in memory of those who fell in the struggle against the Nazis. A sense of grief is combined with a resolution to honour their memory by hard work in rebuilding the country. The two collections which followed in 1962, *Uninhabited Islands*, and *To a Coeval*, contain poems written in the style of a publicist. His long poem, *A Letter to the XXX Century*, written in 1963, is addressed in the form of a letter to the future generations who, the poet confidently believes will realise the new moral code of contemporary man.

(It has not been possible to set out the translation of the poem in the line form of the original as it would have taken up too much space.)

I

Immortal glory to heroes!
Immortal glory! Immortal glory!
Immortal glory to heroes!
Glory to heroes! Glory!
... But why to them, this glory—
poor corpses?
What is it to them, this glory—
the fallen?
All lives restoring. Their own ignoring.
What is it to them, this glory—
poor corpses? ...
If lightnings
flashed and flared in the clouds,
and ponderous heavens with thunder
would rumble,

if all the crowds on earth

screamed aloud—

not one who has perished
would even tremble.

I know:

the sunlight in sightless eyes
is not bright!

I know:

these songs will not soften the stone
o'er the pit!

On behalf of our hearts,
on behalf, though, of life

I avow: To Heroes Immortal Glory! ...

II

And the deathless hymns, the requiem
hymns
o'er the sleepless planet majestic are
soaring . . .

Though not all were heroes,
whose eyes were dimmed—
to the fallen, glory!
Immortal glory! Immortal glory!!

Let us ponder each name,
with sorrow ponder our own . . .
This is not needed by them.

This is our need—alone.
Let us ponder with pride
those lost in the strife . . .

There is one fine right:
to forget self-serving.

There is one high right:
to dare, to be worthy! . . .

Sudden death became bright with
immortal glory.

Surely not death you have proffered us,
Motherland?

Life you have promised us,
love you have promised us,
Motherland.

Surely you bore not babes for dying thus,
Motherland?

Surely not death you desired for us,
Motherland?

Flames slashed across the dark sky!—
You remember,
Motherland?

Quiet you murmured:
'Arise and defend us . . .'

Motherland.

Glory not one of us cried of you,
Motherland.

Simply for each to decide:

I or the

Motherland.

Best-loved of all, dear to our keeping—
Motherland.

Your bitter weeping is our bitter weeping
Motherland.

Your righteous story is our righteous
story,

Motherland.

Your highest glory is our highest glory
Motherland!

III

Then banners of crimson they fluttered,
then blazed out the stars of crimson,
a blinding snowstorm covered
the sunset's blood-crimson drops;
then was heard the tramp of divisions,
the mighty tramp of divisions,
the iron tramp of divisions,
the trusty tramp of the troops!

To the roar and rattle of thunder
unbroken,

we rose in battle, stern, unshaken,
upon our banners inscribed the slogan:
Victory! Victory!!
For the sake of the Fatherland—victory!
For the sake of the living—victory!
For the sake of those coming—victory!
To smash this war we must strive.
And there was no higher pride,
and there was no higher deed—
but, beside the will to survive,
there is also the courage to live!
To the roar and rattle of thunder
unbroken,
we rose in battle, stern, unshaken,
upon our banners inscribed the slogan:
Victory! Victory!!

IV

Gloomy stone, gloomy stone, why so
silent, gloomy stone?

Surely you have never thought,
surely you have never craved
as a tombstone to be wrought,
for an Unknown Warrior's grave?

Gloomy stone, gloomy stone, why so
silent, gloomy stone?

We far off for you went seeking.
Ponderous mountain rocks were
chiselling.

Engines through the night went whistling.
Craftsmen worked at night unsleeping.

So that with their clever hands,
so that with their blood and sweat,
they could change your common veins
into a solemn tomb instead . . .

Surely stones you are not weeping,
guilty, that below earth's barriers,
far too long lie soldiers sleeping?

Nameless soldiers,
Unknown Warriors . . .

But above them grass is fading.

But above them starlight dwindles.

But above them circle eagles.

But above them sun-flowers swaying.

And above them stand the pine-trees.

And at times the snow is coming.

And the orange sun is rising

and the wide, wide sky is flooding.

Time is moving on above them . . .

But somewhere, some time, some time,
some one in the world who loved him,
called the Unknown Soldier's name.

Surely till his very death
he had friends and many another.

Surely in the wide world yet
lives his very aged mother.

There was a girl, his very own.

Where is that girl—where has she
gone? . . .

The soldier, dying, was well-known.
In death became—unknown, alone.

V

Ah, then why, red sun, rise glistening,
 why not say farewell—why burn again?
 Ah, then why, from war's deep misery,
 son, do you not return again?
 In distress I'd give my eyes for you,
 like an eagle swiftly fly to you . . .
 Call to me then, flesh and blood of mine!
 Little one of mine. Only son of mine . . .
 Daylight hurts my sight.
 I am sick at night.
 Come, my hope so bright!
 Little mite of mine.
 Little light of mine
 Little plight of mine—
 where can you be?
 I can't find that little way to you,
 where to weep above your grave for
 you . . .
 I want not the least thing here I see,
 only you my son, so dear to me.
 Over the trees my little swallow sped!
 Over the seas, the mountains, he has
 fled . . .
 If our eyes run dry from troubles deep—
 with our hearts then will we mothers
 weep.
 Daylight hurts my sight.
 I am sick at night.
 Come, my hope so bright!
 Little mite of mine.
 Little light of mine.
 Little plight of mine—
 where can you be?

VI

When then, o future? Soon maybe?
 In answer to how much pain? . . .
 The proudest of us already you see
 want to meet you on the way.
 You threaten with jagged palings.
 You frighten with ragged cliffs . . .
 But we lift ourselves up with cables,
 which from our own nerves we twist!
 We'll mature!
 We'll put up with all jokers.
 And we'll become greater than gods! . . .
 And our children will make their
 snowballs
 out of the cumulus clouds.

VII

This song is of radiant sunlight.
 This song is of sun in the soul.
 This song is of our young planet,
 where all lies ahead as our goal!
 In the name of the sun, of the Motherland
 promises ring.

In the name of sweet life we swear it
 here to the slain:

songs by our fathers half-sung—
 to the end we shall sing!
 Plans by our fathers begun—
 we shall build once again!
 To the sun in flight valedictory
 you to heights of blue must stream.
 We—born of the songs of victory,
 are beginning to live and dream!
 In the name of the sun, of the Motherland,
 promises ring.
 In the name of sweet life we swear it
 here to the slain:
 songs by our fathers half-sung—
 to the end we shall sing!
 Plans by our fathers begun—
 we shall build once again!
 So then hurry you springtime flowers!
 In place of death we bring birth.
 Be not haughty you distant spheres—
 but expect new guests from Earth!
 In the name of the sun, of the Motherland
 promises ring.
 In the name of sweet life we swear it
 here to the slain:
 songs by our fathers half-sung—
 to the end we shall sing!
 Plans by our fathers begun—
 we shall build once again!

VIII

Listen! This is we who speak.
 The dead ones. Stark.
 Listen! This is we who speak.
 From there. From the dark.
 Listen! with eyes wide apart.
 Listen straight from the start.
 This is we who speak, the dead ones.
 Listen! we knock on your hearts . . .
 Do not fear! One night
 we shall trouble you deep in your sleep.
 In flight over meadows our voices
 from silence will leap.
 We've forgotten the fragrance of flowers,
 and the poplar's breath.
 We've forgotten old earth.
 What's life worth now on earth?
 And the birds? Do they sing still on earth
 without us?
 Do the cherries still swing there on earth
 without us?
 Do the rivers still gleam?
 And the cloud-banks stream overhead?
 Without us.
 We've forgotten the mead and the trees
 long-hidden.
 For us to stride on the earth is not given.
 Never given! and no one awakens the
 orchestra's brass with sad breath . . .

But most frightful of all—
 yes, even more frightful than death:
 to know that the birds do still sing there
 on earth,
 without us,
 that the cherries still swing there on earth
 without us.
 That the rivers gleam.
 That the cloud-banks stream overhead
 without us.
 Prolongation of life! And again the
 creation of day.
 Prolongation of life! Spring ration of
 rain on the way.
 And the waxing wind sways the harvest
 swathe upon swathe.
 That is your coming fate.
 That is our common fate . . .
 Thus then birds still sing there on earth
 without us.
 And the cherries still swing there on earth
 without us.
 And the rivers gleam.
 And the cloud-banks stream overhead.
 Without us . . .

IX

My day comes nigh. I shall not die . . .
 If I should die I will be grass.
 I'll be a branch.
 Wood-smoke a-dance.
 Springtime in March.
 First evening star.
 Wave on the bar.
 Foam on the bar!
 My restless heart I'll carry far.
 I'll be a tarn, thunder-clap sharp,
 child's honest laugh, wild forest path . . .
 Then let the grass wave on the steppe.
 Then let the bar with breakers be set . . .
 Only to sing! Only to think!
 Only to drink life to the dregs!
 Only at night hear the wild horn!
 Only in sight ripe fields of corn! . . .
 Give me life's pure breath, o fate!
 Give me pride, in death, o fate!

X

Ponder them!
 Through every age, through each year—

ponder them!
 The ones who no longer will come—
 nevermore—
 ponder them!
 No wailing! In your throats curb groans
 to a murmur,
 groaning a murmur.
 The fallen recalling be ever worthy!
 Always be worthy!
 In reaping and singing,
 In rhyming and dreaming,
 through life's lengthy journey,
 while moments are winging,
 while bosoms are breathing,
 always be worthy!
 People!
 Wherever heart-beats are pounding—
 ponder them!
 At what a high price
 your joyful fortune they founded—
 you're bound to ponder them!
 Singing your song which you speed on the
 wing—
 ponder them!
 O'er those who now nevermore will
 sing—
 ponder them!
 Tell all your children of them,
 that they should remember!
 Tell all your children's children of them,
 that they should also remember!
 At every season of this living sphere,
 ponder them!
 Swinging your ship to a gleaming star—
 those who perished,
 ponder them!
 Onward to trembling spring, people of
 earth.
 Quell awful war to hell with all war,
 people of earth!
 Your dream carry forward year after
 year,
 fill life full of wonder then! . . .
 But those who no longer will come—
 nevermore—
 I conjure—
 ponder them!

Izborsk and Pechora

ROBERT DAGLISH

concludes his story of "The Fair Land of Pskov"

Besides showing us the building he had restored in Pskov, Mr. Smirnov took us out to Old Izborsk, a fascinating little village about 20 miles west of Pskov.

On the hill above the village is one of the oldest Slav encampments, and under the ruined fortress walls there is a church and a cemetery where, according to legend, the Varangian warrior Truver, youngest brother of Rurik, who became prince of Novgorod and founded the Russian State, lies buried. Even today, at Easter, the local people come to the cemetery, spread richly embroidered tablecloths on the graves and drink wine in a solemn semi-heathen ritual of "conversing" with their ancestors.

While Izborsk still breathes the spirit of heathen times, Pechora, 14 miles away, has a flourishing monastery closely connected with the Orthodox Church.

Thanks to Mr. Smirnov's good offices (he is completely irreligious himself but was responsible for the restoration at State expense of the entire monastery wall and its numerous fortified towers) I was able to meet the Abbot, Father Alipy. He is a tall, bearded, humorous man in his early fifties who took us light-footedly all round the monastery and its grounds in a snowstorm, showed us the caves (*peshcheri*) from which the monastery takes its name, answered all our questions and finally entertained us to some very strong 'monastery kvass' and delicious pickled apples and tomatoes.

The monastery, he told us, now has about a hundred monks, but for every hundred new applicants only two or three endure the term of probation. The life is arduous but, according to the abbot, joyful; worship from six to nine in the morning and six to nine in the evening, and till midnight on feast-days. And between services comes all the work of keeping the monastery going, from stacking firewood to painting ikons, which last Father Alipy, once a member of the Union of Artists, does himself. 'But why do so many people leave?' I asked again, as he showed us the burial 'apartments' in the caves, where the constant temperature leads to natural mummification. 'Ah, you see,' he said cheerfully, 'people nowadays will keep proposing ways of improving monastic life and we don't need any of their proposals. In our holy books it is all written down just what a man must do to become perfect, and those who will not obey must go.'

There is yet another place the visitor to Pskov can see, although the journey there, by road, is rather a long one. About 60 miles to the east of Pskov, not far from the Leningrad-Kiev Road, lies the Pushkin Memorial State Reserve, which contains the Svyatogorsk Monastery* and the Mikhailovskoye and Tryokhgorskoye estates. Mikhailovskoye was Pushkin's own estate, where he lived while banished from St. Petersburg, and neighbouring Tryokhgorskoye, which belonged to his friends, formed the setting for the rural chapters of Eugene Onegin. Unfortunately the time at our disposal and the early thaw prevented us from making the journey, but it stands high on the list of places I should like to visit, not only because of Pushkin, but also because I want to see more of this fascinating ancient corner of Russia, particularly in summer.

* Mr. Daglish's reference, in his last article, to the Snetogorsk Monastery, on the outskirts of Pskov, was erroneously altered to 'Svyatogorsk Monastery', Editor.

OBITUARY

Konstantin Paustovsky

(*Tributes by English and Soviet Writers*)

Konstantin Paustovsky, who died on 14th July, 1968, at the age of 76, following a long and painful illness, was one of the most widely loved and respected writers of the older generation.

Born in Kiev, he had his first story published in 1911 whilst he was still a pupil at High School. He began his working life as a metal worker in the Donetz; was a tram driver, fisherman and journalist. He was a medical orderly during the first world war, joined the Red Army after the 1917 Revolution and fought in the battles for Kiev during the Civil War.

His first major work was *Kara Bugaz*, a fictionalised account of the Transcaspien deserts. This was followed by short stories and occasional longer works in which Paustovsky drew upon his travels around the Soviet Union, above all in the villages and forests of his beloved Ukraine.

Paustovsky was also a brilliant essayist, writing distinguished studies of, among others, Charles Dickens and Hans Andersen. During the Second World War he was a war correspondent on the Southern Front.

He became widely known in Britain only recently, following the publication of successive volumes of his autobiography, *Story of a Life*, which won wide praise.

He was a literary craftsman of a high order. His writing is marked with profound lyricism and romanticism, a richness of texture and an evocative quality which presents a serious challenge to the translator.

He was a friend to young writers, and did much to re-establish the popularity of writers of earlier years, such as Andrei Platonov and Mikhail Bulgakov.

Finally, Konstantin Paustovsky was a man of generosity and principle. He offered to give evidence in defence of Sinyavsky and Daniel; he was one of more than 70 writers who unsuccessfully urged last year's Congress of the Union of Soviet Writers to discuss the issues of literary censorship posed in a letter from Alexander Solzhenitsyn; he earlier this year appealed for a review of the trial of the group of young people including Ginsburg and Galanskov. He had that quality of civic courage and social responsibility which is the mark of the truly great writers of his country.—DENNIS OGDEN.

Millions of readers throughout the world know the novels and essays of Konstantin Paustovsky but, above all, they know him for his short stories and folk legends.

Konstantin Paustovsky was a poet. He was a poet in his love of people and nature. And his books are filled with the lyricism of the poet. He was a man of emotion and so he felt deeply. He was convinced of what he said and thus he was convincing. The reader repaid him generously with warmth for his warmth.

He lived his life as a true writer believing in the highest calling of literature, looking upon literature as a trust.

It is terrible to think that we shall never again be able to talk with him, read to him what we have just finished writing, get to know his opinion, consult with him. Yet one more representative of a great generation is dead, one to whom young writers came for words of encouragement, one among those who made the link of our own times with the humanism of Russian classics a living reality.

Paustovsky was working on his book to his last day. There are writers to whom death comes when they are already dead. Paustovsky died alive.—**EVGENNY VINOKUROV.**

(Literaturnaya Gazyeta, 17th July, 1968.)
Translated by Kathleen Taylor.

Soviet Views of Us

A survey of some British studies in the USSR

ROBERT DAGLISH

In this age of specialisation the range of British studies in the Soviet Union is, of course, far too wide to be covered in one article or even a series of articles by one author. To make a critical appraisal of what is known about Britain in the cultural and technical fields would require not only an expert knowledge of all the main subjects but also a vast amount of time to do the necessary research and reading. The lone scholar would be fully occupied keeping track of —newspaper articles and books even in his own field, and he would need to be fluent in at least Russian, although it would be as well for him to know, say, Georgian and Estonian also.

Yet the fascination of the subject remains. How much do the Russians, or rather the peoples of the USSR, know about us? Do their ideas correspond in any way to the reality as we know it?

For an answer to the question 'how much,' my main source of information was the Foreign Languages Library in Moscow. When I first came to the USSR, nearly 20 years ago, the library's lending department was housed in rather dismal premises in the Petrovskaya Linia. It was not bad. There were all the classics, and for more modern reading there was plenty of Priestley, Cronin, Wells and other popular authors. Many of the books in those days bore labels

to say they were wartime gifts from Britain and America. Galsworthy was still a strong favorite with readers, though his picture of England was never, as is sometimes thought, uncritically accepted. James Aldridge had made an exciting impact on the Soviet literary scene and was being widely translated. People were becoming interested in Graham Greene. Somerset Maugham, though suspect because of his 'intelligence service past,' was available, but the time was yet to come when a prominent Soviet scholar, asked by a Soviet newspaper what had been the best book of the year, would state as his choice *The Summing Up*.

The rest of the library, the reference and reading rooms quite near to the Kremlin, in Razin Street, I got to know some years later. Its appearance was deceptive. Four floors built on the foundations of what had been the English settlement in the time of Ivan the Terrible, could not possibly, it seemed, accommodate an adequate supply of reference material on world literature. But there was a depository somewhere else and it was possible to obtain quite obscure works at fairly short notice. In my field, translation, I obtained, for instance, William Tyndale's essay on the subject after a wait of a few days.

The reading and lecture rooms were, of course, quite inadequate in view of the intense interest in English literature alone. But even then visiting and resident English speakers were regularly invited to talk and read at the library and the hall was always packed on these occasions with students and their teachers and other Muscovites learning English in their spare time.

Richard Aldington spoke there just before his death. John Steinbeck addressed a crowded assembly, most of them teachers or teachers-to-be, with typical abruptness. The two kinds of people he hated most were, he said, policemen and teachers. Producers and actors from visiting theatre companies came to perform and to answer questions; Martin Starkie read Mark Twain and Yeats. British exchange students turned up to read plays and take part in brains trust sessions in which they gave spontaneous answers to questions from the audience on various aspects of British and Soviet life. Round about 1957, these talks and readings began to be recorded and in the new premises, which have a large and excellently equipped linguaphone room, they are kept on file for the use of students. I had done some talks and readings myself and was much surprised and amused recently to be able to listen to my own statements of nearly ten years ago.

Since the great move to the Kotelnicheskaya Embankment took place in May 1967, all these facilities have been enormously expanded. The new building, with its spacious halls, its modern Finnish furnishings, easily accessible files, linguaphone apparatus and open shelves full of standard reference works, is first class by any standards. Thanks to the enlargement of its premises, it now includes 3,800,000 items. It operates a huge exchange and loan scheme with libraries all over the world (with 1,300 institutions in 78 countries).

I have devoted so much space to this library, partly because I know it well and partly because of the peculiar importance that libraries enjoy in Soviet cultural development. One has to remember that Soviet people, if only for lack of hard currency, are not generally in a position to order any book they may need from abroad. The F.L.L. is open to everyone over 16, i.e., who possesses a passport. This means that they can read in the general reading room and borrow books to take home. There is also a senior reading room, for senior and post-graduate students, and a professors' room, and for immediate access

to all that the library possesses one must be a member of these. It was pointed out to me, however, that the library does not have a very wide selection of periodicals from the west, although the main journals and newspapers are there.

If one adds to this library, the libraries of Moscow University, the Pedagogical Institute, the Institute of International Relations and many other specialised bodies, not to mention the Lenin Library, with its 11,000,000 books, one can safely assume that the Soviet scholar is not starved of material.

What do Soviet students of Britain produce?

The FLL's leading English bibliographer, Inna Levidova, who recently produced a complete bibliography on H. G. Wells, and a selection of Osborne, Waterhouse and Wesker plays with her own introduction, kindly showed me her card index and introduced me to the bi-monthly *Literature and Art of the Peoples of the USSR and Foreign Countries*. This is an invaluable library reference work, which lists every book, article and thesis on the humanities published in any language of the USSR. Every bi-monthly issue contains several pages listing works and articles on Britain, translations from English and even reviews of performances by British actors and musicians in the USSR. Working backwards through the 1967 issues I came across the following interesting items.

At a teacher training college in the iron and steel town of Kursk, a Mrs. Ivanova had written a thesis on the history of Russo-British relations in the 1880s and 1890s. In Leningrad, another scholar had been studying Chekhov and Maupassant in the tradition of the 20th century English short story. Another Leningrad scholar, E. I. Klimenko, had written a book on Robert Browning. Hugh Macdiarmid's *Spanish poems* had been translated into Russian. So had George Mikes's *How to be an Alien* and *How not to be Clever*.

Alan Sillitoe's *Key to the Door*, John Wain's *Nuncle*, Fred Hoyle's *The Black Cloud* and Jack Lindsay's *Hannibal* had been published in Estonian.

A book on *William Golding and the Existentialist Novel* by the well known English scholar, Ivashova, had appeared in Ukrainian. At the Moscow Pedagogical Institute another prominent English scholar, Mikhalskaya, had produced a thesis on the literary and critical views of Virginia Woolf.

William Golding's *Boy Billy* had been translated into Ukrainian. Some Keats had also been translated into Ukrainian, Milton (Samson) into Georgian, Shelley into Kazakh (via the Russian), *The Merchant of Venice* into Tatar and *Hamlet* into Chuvashi. A selection of English jokes had appeared in Tajik.

In Perm, in the Urals, a scholar had written on the peculiarities of Conrad's style. Further east still, in Yakutia, Agatha Christie's *Third Girl* was being serialised in a youth journal.

C. P. Snow's *Corridors of Power* had been translated into Russian. Peter Ustinov's *Photo-Finish* had appeared in Russian in the journal *Teatr*. Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* and Shiela Delaney's *Lion in Love* had also been translated into Russian.

In the magazine *Problems of Philosophy*, the producer, Zavadsky, had written on Shaw's philosophical dramas and contemporary theatre aesthetics.

Kenneth Graham's *Wind in the Willows* had appeared in Lithuanian, some G. K. Chesterton in Moldavian and Elliot's *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock* in Ukrainian. In response to C. Day Lewis's lecture. *The Lyric Impulse* at

Harvard in 1965, Zakharov wrote an article, *The Rehabilitation of Lyricism in Problems of Literature*.

There is not space here to list all the interesting items I found in Mrs. Levidova's card index, but I have included them in an appendix.*

Among the works on art, there was a translation of an English biography of Constable, an article and some good reproductions of the work of Henry Moore in the final volume of the new *History of World Art*, and so on.

Admittedly, the general Soviet reader is not likely to have his opinion of British objectivity spoiled by reading the kind of nonsense about the Soviet Union that is occasionally trotted out in the novels of, say, Anthony Burgess, although a watchful Soviet reviewer has produced a study of the subject entitled *New Variations on an Old Theme; Some Notes on Anti-Communism in post-war English Writing*. And the fantasies of the late Ian Fleming received a quite thorough analysis in *Novy Mir* recently by the critic Turovskaya, who did not even forget to stress his masterly control of what she called the 'informative technique.'

Serious British studies of the Soviet Union and its history are not being ignored either. When Alexander Werth wrote *Russia at War* some years ago I doubt whether even he could have predicted that it would eventually be translated into Russian, or that it would be criticised in *Novy Mir* for attributing too much importance to the role of the individual (*Stalin*) in history.

So much for what Soviet people see of us, at least in the literary field. Now for the more difficult question; what do they see *in us*?

The present cultural agreement between Britain and USSR provides for the exchange of 'up to 45 young scientific workers, postgraduate and undergraduate students from each country in the humanities and sciences for a total period not exceeding 360 months.' From the Soviet side the majority of exchange students are scientists; from Britain, the reverse is the case. This article would be misleading if I did not point out that the first thing Soviet people as a whole see in contemporary Britain is her technical achievement. The amount of study that Soviet scientists have put into this field is quite beyond the scope of this article, even if it could be traced in the various laboratories and engineering institutes of the USSR. One can be sure, however, that the work being done in this field is no less impressive than in the humanities.

Some journalism, probably the greater part, does not compare in importance with the work of scientists or students of the humanities. But there is a kind of journalism, the best, that bridges and even crowns the two branches of knowledge and makes it available to the common man. Vladimir Osipov's recent book, *Britain in the Sixties*, belongs to this category. It has no direct reference either to science or to the humanities, but it sold 60,000 copies in no time and one has to go on the waiting list at libraries to obtain it.

Osipov's book is packed with the kind of human detail that the Russians love to learn and that has been lacking up to now in Soviet writing about Britain. With an unusual power of lucid explanation he covers acres of British life and institutions—the working of the Establishment, the City, Parliament, property owning and house buying—that have scarcely been touched upon before.

*Available from the SCR Office.

All Soviet political writing, of course, stressed the existence of the working class and its aspirations as frequently as these are passed over in most British writing of the same kind. Osipov is no exception, but his eye for detail and appreciation of character are so keen that one never feels his conclusions are stereotyped or superficial. Another important thing is that even when he disapproves of some institution or practice, he rarely fails to point out its positive side; even the City comes in for some unexpected praise for the 'mutual confidence' that makes it possible for huge sums of money to change hands through a mere verbal promise. Incidentally, from what Osipov says in his first chapter, it would appear that the book was written partly, at least, in reply to a reproach he himself received from Mrs. James Aldridge, who said to him one evening in Moscow: 'Vladimir, you don't love England . . .'

It may well be that Osipov is just a more perceptive and sensitive man than some of his colleagues, but one is tempted to think that his excellent book is in some measure the end-product of a process that began, say, about 20 years ago in those very attractive library premises in the Petrovskaya Linia.

Our views of the Soviet Union

A survey of Soviet studies in Britain

MAURICE HOOKHAM

Where does one begin to trace the outlines of our views of the Soviet Union? If one goes back into time to pick up the threads it is possible to find ample evidence of first rate studies of Russia by British scholars. Almost all of these were written by people outside the ranks of Universities and they were mainly free lance amateurs inspired by an individual curiosity about Russia or interested in trade and adventure. Professor Pankratova, in the *Anglo-Soviet Journal* in 1956 (Vol. XVII, No. 1) mentions the reports of British travellers in Russia in the 16th and 17th centuries onwards (Chancellor, Jenkinson, Randolph, Bowes, Fletcher and Collins) as 'a valuable source for the study of the histories of our two countries.' After this promising start, travellers, traders and adventurers found greater inspiration and reward in travel to, and writing about, the various parts of the British Empire. Professor R. E. F. Smith, in his recent inaugural lecture, points out however that 'some of the most perceptive modern writers in English on Russia also had experience in another great agrarian Empire—India.'

It could not be said of any of these writings that they made the kind of contribution to knowledge that eminent Russian scholars have made to the study of British history. Professor Kozminsky said of the work of Kovalevsky and Vinogradov that 'It was Russian scholars who blazed the trail of research on a series of fundamental problems of British agrarian history.'

At the end of the Second World War an interdepartmental commission of inquiry on Oriental, Slavonic, East European and African Studies, appointed

by Anthony Eden in December 1944, reported to Ernest Bevin in 1947. It had the following to say about Russian Studies. 'The study of the Russian language in Great Britain dates back to the 16th century. In the reign of Queen Elizabeth it enjoyed a vogue and it is said that the Queen herself studied Russian. The Russian classics of the 19th century have nearly all been translated into English, sometimes with great brilliance. It was not, however, until the later part of the 19th century that Russian studies found a place in our Universities.' It might have been better to have said 'end of the 19th century' and 'won a place.' The facts are that the first lecturer in Russian at a British University (Oxford) was appointed in 1870 and it was not until 30 years later that this was raised to a professorship. A lectureship was established at Cambridge in 1899 and in 1907 the University of Liverpool began courses for the systematic study of Russia, its language and area. A committee of inquiry into the study of modern languages, set up by the Prime Minister in 1918, recommended the separate establishment of the School of Slavonic Studies in the University of London, to which Sir Bernard Pares was appointed as the first Professor of Russian Language, Literature and History in 1919. Six other British Universities subsequently began to provide some teaching in Russian language.

The Report of 1947 surveyed the position of Russian studies at the outbreak of the war in the following terms. 'Immediately after the war of 1914-18, Russian studies began to expand rapidly, but the political conditions in the inter-war period which prevented normal intercourse between the two countries led to a sharp fall in the demand for Russian studies and the provision made at many of the universities concerned fell into a decline. Lack of contact with the Soviet Union imposed a serious handicap on the teaching staffs and the prospects of employment in Government service and in commerce for students of Russian were poor. In 1939 the reasons which have brought about some revival of Russian studies within the past three years had not begun to make themselves felt. Russian studies were, therefore, represented by a few isolated posts and the numbers of United Kingdom students reading for degrees, though larger than in any other branch of our inquiry, rarely exceeded ten a year in any one university.' It further observed that 'It is evident in all discussions on Russian Studies that—for reasons which imply no criticism of the few scholars who have been in a position to encourage and pursue research in this country—the amount of advanced research being conducted is almost negligible.'

Although the Scarborough Committee was composed almost entirely of civil servants it made out a brave case for the rapid expansion of Russian studies. It said 'The great public at home had had their imagination stirred by events in Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union and India. Large numbers of men and women realised for the time being, as they have not done before, that in the interests of good international relationships we cannot go on ignoring the manners and customs of the greater part of the world's population. Interest in other peoples, understanding their history, their achievements and their characteristics, are a part of the foundation on which lasting international friendships can be built. Unless these studies flourish in this country this interest cannot be satisfied and there can be no such understanding . . .' 'Unless this knowledge is nourished our horizons may once more close in upon us and herein lies the importance of the task awaiting all those concerned with these studies. There is a latent interest which if not encouraged now may be lost

for a generation or more. This interest must be sustained by knowledge and this knowledge in its turn by scholarship, teaching and research.'

The University Grants Committee set up a sub-committee in 1959 to review the developments which had occurred in Universities as a result of the recommendations of the Scarborough Committee. The report of this Hayter Committee in 1961 noted that the number of academic staff in Slavonic departments of the Universities had increased from 26 to 60 by 1952 and then rose more slowly to 77 in 1960. It noted that 'In the provincial Universities interest in Russian has increased rapidly since 1957. Thirteen universities in all are now teaching Russian, and eight more plan to do so in the next quinquennium.' Nevertheless the sub-committee considered 'the overall pattern of development of . . . Slavonic studies as disappointing.' Their chief disappointment was that interest in Slavonic studies was mainly confined to the language departments which paid 'little attention . . . either at undergraduate or post-graduate level to these countries as living societies.' It therefore recommended that the new developments of these studies should take place in the history, geography, law, economics and other social science departments and faculties. The three objectives it set for these developments were an increase in the amount of research, an increase in the number of students outside language departments who come into contact with the ideas, history and problems of the non-western world, and the achievement of a better balance between linguistic and non-linguistic studies.

In the brief period since the Hayter Committee reported, the number of students who have been brought into contact with the ideas, history and problems of the Soviet Union has increased and in most cases the balance of linguistic and non-linguistic studies has been reasonably well achieved. It is obvious, however, that in some of these three-year courses it has not been possible to maintain the quality of the discipline in the relevant social studies (economics, history and politics). Any undergraduate three-year course of area study is open to this kind of objection. It is particularly strong in the case of Soviet studies because the amount of research on which such study can be based is still very inadequate.

The analysis of Theses in Slavonic Studies in British Universities, 1907-1966, made by Dr. Simmons in the *Oxford Slavonic Papers*, Vol XIII, 1967, confirms this. There were only eleven theses accepted before 1920, the earliest being in 1907. Five of these were written at Oxford and all were on theological subjects. Of the remaining six, five were at Birmingham and one of these, a study of the Romantic movement in Russian literature, was the first recorded British thesis on a Slavonic literary theme. There were 59 theses between 1920 and 1945 (25 per cent on language and literature) and 243 from 1946 to 1966 (40 per cent on language and literature, 24 per cent on economic or political and 27 per cent on historical subjects). Eighty per cent of these refer to Russia and the Soviet Union. Dr. Simmons comments that the 30 theses in the social sciences provide 'clear evidence for a concern with broader aspects (at least in Russian and Soviet Studies) on the lines recommended by the Hayter Committee.'

There are, however, only eleven of these on economic subjects relating to the Soviet period, not a single history thesis on the Soviet period, seven on Soviet literature and seven classified under the general title of Politics, Sociology and the Revolutionary Movement. Only three may perhaps be said to have made a major contribution to Soviet Studies.

Close examination of the reading lists prepared for courses in Soviet Studies in British Universities will show that the bulk of the recommended writing is produced by American Universities and a considerable proportion is work sponsored by private foundations with the express purpose of combating communist ideology. The only journal published in Britain devoted to the general field of Soviet studies, called *Soviet Studies*, has to rely for a substantial part of its contributions on American scholarship.

The small and slowly-growing band of Teachers and Research Workers in the USSR, which has met annually over 14 years for conferences, set up in 1967 the National Association for Soviet and Eastern European Studies. In the members' handbook published in June 1968, about 130 members are listed, with about 100 declaring an interest in the Soviet Union as a field of study.

In the light of this evidence one may ask whether the Scarborough Committee's objective of sustaining interest in the Soviet Union by knowledge 'and this knowledge in its turn by scholarship, teaching and research' has been realised. It clearly has not and in its absence our views of the Soviet Union must continue to rest on a far from adequate basis. The most hopeful signs of improvement is the gradual expansion in the number of cultural exchanges of teachers, research workers and students between British and Soviet Universities, and the steady improvement in the provision of Russian language teaching.

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Education News

There is no end to the discussion on every aspect of education and the Soviet people are the most persistent and thoroughgoing of critics. Periodically, the criticism having been well considered by a vast number of practitioners, results in an official statement on desirable changes, on needs and attitudes.

Such a statement by Professor Mikhail Prokofiev, Minister of Education of the RSFSR, was published in *Izvestia* in connection with the 50th Anniversary of the Soviet Revolution.

He criticizes the unintelligent approach by many educationalists to the principle of linking school and life. He enumerates the many mistakes made which resulted in concentration on memory instead of on stimulating thought and inquiry. He also points out that in many of the basic subjects taught too much attention has been given to the practical side.

The importance of full secondary education for modern life is emphasized. It is also pointed out that the choice of the future direction and of the optional subject must be an individual matter with some regard for family consultation. Prokofiev notes that the introduction of optional subjects, being a voluntary choice, demands a particularly good teacher to retain and develop the first enthusiasm.

There has been, in recent years, a vast amount of research in every aspect of education. One of the results has been to reduce the learning load that made such demands on the pupil's memory and, instead, to make greater demands on creative thinking especially about the problems of society and of its development.

Today the school syllabus for literature, for example, is not designed to 'do a particular literary work,' but to stimulate pupils to think about it, to appreciate the beauty of its imagery and to develop a taste for reading.

The article shows that the Minister has accepted as universally desirable the individual approach, the need for the teacher to make learning exciting and colourful, all of which has been the approach of the best teachers for many years now in different parts of the Soviet Union. It is desirable that this should now become universal practice.

Science must no longer be a matter for mechanical experimenting. Methods of instruction should be such as will help the pupil 'to perceive a science not as a body of fully-formed, immutable propositions, but as a field of learning which plunges deeper and deeper into the sphere of the unknown.'

In the article there is also criticism, which one has met over the years, of Education Institutes and Teacher Training Colleges for not paying adequate attention to the above-mentioned points. On the one hand they are too academic while on the other hand they do not provide the profound intellectual basis which stimulates original research. Much more individual research should be done especially in the Institutes of Education and in the Education departments in universities. All this should be directed towards helping the pupils to become active citizens.

Prokofiev quotes Lenin as many others have done. 'Schools apart from life, apart from politics, are a lie and a hypocrisy.'

BEATRICE KING.

FACILITIES FOR AFFILIATED ORGANISATIONS

Members of affiliated organisations are entitled to services which include the supply of information, visual aids, use of the reference library, recorded and sheet music, as well as the facilities provided by the University of Essex Library with whom we have a special arrangement. The Visual Aids and Information Departments charge according to the time spent on selection or research.

A number of new 16-mm Soviet films, including Russian language teaching, with good quality sound tracks, can be supplied by ETV Films, 2, Doughty Street, London, WC1 (Tel: 01-405 0395), and by Contemporary Films, 55, Greek Street, London, W1 (Tel: 01-437 9392), with whom the Society has special arrangements whereby affiliated organisations receive 20 per cent discount on Soviet films hired. Additional special rates are available for serial bookings. (On booking films, organisations should apply direct to ETV or Contemporary Films stating that they are affiliated). Reduced rates are also available for members wishing to join the Paris Pullman Club, Paris Pullman Cinema, 65, Drayton Gardens, London, SW10 (Tel: FREmantle 5898). Application should be made direct to the Club Secretary.

The Society can arrange for British or Soviet speakers to give lectures or talks. Special assistance is given to visitors to the USSR wishing to visit institutions and meet specialists, either on specialist tours organised by the Society or to supplement independently arranged visits to the Soviet Union. Members of affiliated organisations are given preference for the limited number of places available on Russian language courses (including scholarships) in the Soviet Union. There are facilities for meeting Soviet specialists and lecturers visiting Britain, and special efforts are made to affiliated organisations outside London to receive Soviet visitors.

Priority will be given to affiliated organisations to receive a limited number of invitations to selective functions arranged by the Society, such as special receptions, etc.

We should like to add, however, that the Society exists not only for the benefit of members, but also in the wider context to help to improve cultural and scientific relations between Britain and the Soviet Union, towards which subscriptions can play an important part.

Annual Subscription Rates for Affiliated Organisations

which includes subscription to the 'Anglo-Soviet Journal'

	£	s.	d.
Firms and Institutions	10	10	0
Educational Establishments and Societies			
(Greater London)	4	4	0
Educational Establishments and Societies			
(Outside London)	3	3	0

Please send further particulars to:

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SCR News

As a result of requests made at the Annual General Meeting, more information about the activities of the Society is to be published in the *Journal*.

The AGM on 25th May was attended by about 120 members whom the Soviet Embassy invited to a buffet and film show afterwards. The meeting was particularly valuable since many members participated in the discussion on the development of the work of the Society. The Council will do its best to carry out the suggestions made.

Members of the new Council and of the Executive Committee (elected at the Council's first meeting last July) are printed on the inside cover. We are very pleased to welcome Alan Bush as a new vice-president, and two new members of the editorial board, Mr. M. Lavery, of Leeds University, and Mr. D. Ogden, of Regent Street Polytechnic.

We are also very happy to report that Dr. Crome, Vice-Chairman, and Mrs. Saharova, member of the Council, who both underwent serious operations recently, are now fully recovered.

The events described below are selected as being some of the more interesting which the Society has arranged recently or will be arranging in the future. Consequently there are many omissions, especially of particular arrangements made for large numbers of Soviet visitors in which only the voluntary help of many members made possible.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Russian Course—April 8—17, 1969

Because of the limited number of courses in the Russian language available in the Soviet Union, the Society is sponsoring an intensive Russian Language Course in London, for which we have been fortunate in obtaining the services of 25 experienced Soviet teachers of Russian to foreigners. We have booked Goldsmith's College for this Course, since it is considered to have the most up-to-date facilities for such a Course. All the Russian teachers are specialists in different fields of Russian language studies and of various aspects of culture in the Soviet Union.

Students can attend either on a residential or on a non-residential basis. The provisional cost in each case being:

	£	s.	d.
Residential (inclusive of meals)	27	10	0
Bed and Breakfast	21	0	0
Non-residential	11	0	0

The Course is open to sixth form Students of Russian, College and University Students, Teachers and to Individuals of equivalent standards. Students will be divided into small groups of from three to seven, according to their level of knowledge of the language. The group will study different aspects of the language: grammar, phonetics, aspects of verbs, etc. Lectures will be given either to larger groups, or to the whole body of students on the cultural scene in the Soviet Union, literature and the arts, etc. Up-to-date material will be used in classes and lectures, i.e. films on the Russian language, feature films, documentaries, film strips, and other audio-visual aids, including the Language Laboratory.

Excursions organised for the benefit of the Soviet teachers will also be open to students, and social events will be arranged in which students will be able to participate.

These excursions provide an opportunity for the students to develop closer relations with the teachers and have greater opportunities for Russian conversation, since they will be so arranged that each coach will carry some students as well as teachers. This will also enable the Russian teachers to learn more about life in our country through the discussions which will inevitably ensue. Four half-day excursions are planned, as well as several evening ones, and possibly a visit to a theatre. (Such excursions and other extra-mural activities are optional extras and are not included in the prices quoted.)

Particulars of the programme for the Russian Language Course can be obtained from The Secretary, Society for Cultural Relations with the USSR, 118, Tottenham Court Road, London, W.1.

'Club' Activities

The regular monthly 'get-togethers' for members in London, start on 18th, September at 7 p.m. when Mr. Levy introduces a programme of Soviet amateur films from Russia, Latvia and Estonia at the Paris Pullman Club.

The next meeting will be at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, 16th October, at the New Intourist Cinema, 292, Regent St., W.1. when it is hoped that Mrs. Krugerskaya of the Writers' Union, and two Soviet writers will be present. **The writers are willing to give talks on Soviet literature, especially to staff and students of universities and colleges. Those interested, please contact the Secretary as soon as possible.**

Film Shows

We shall try, as far as the availability of suitable films permits, to show Soviet films in the Russian language every other month, alternating with films with English sub-titles or commentaries. We shall also endeavour to have introductory talks by British or Soviet specialists on appropriate occasions. The Bowater House Cinema at Knightsbridge has again been booked for the Society's film season of 35mm Soviet films on the last Friday in each month (excluding December) at 7 p.m., starting on 27th September, 1968, and ending on 30th May, 1969. The first film, on September 27th, will be a new Soviet feature production, with English sub-titles, "The Elder Sister." "The Snowstorm" in Russian only, will be the main feature on October 25th.

(For further details, please see the enclosed circular.) Eight or 16mm film shows will also be occasionally held on club nights.

Premises

The Society is purchasing a larger and more suitable freehold property in Brixton for its offices, together with an adjacent site for possible future expansion. We anticipate moving there early in 1969. The new address will be 318-320, Brixton Road, London, S.W.9.

Golden Anniversary

Tbilisi State University will be celebrating its 50th anniversary from 21st-28th October, 1968. The Society sends its warmest congratulations on the successes achieved and its best wishes for the future. Representatives from British universities will be attending the celebrations, including Oxford, Cambridge,

London and Glasgow. Professor D. M. Lang will be officially representing Oxford University. He holds an Honorary Doctorate of Tblisi University. Any University requiring further information concerning this Golden Jubilee Celebration, should contact Professor Lang at Connaught Hall, Tavistock Square, London, W.C.1.

Dinner-Dance, Wednesday, 6th November

In association with Frames Tours Ltd., a dinner-dance with cabaret will be held for the 700 Soviet passengers on the *Ivan Franko*, which is arriving at Tilbury early in the morning of the 6th. Further details are contained in the enclosed circular.

RECENT EVENTS

Specialist Tours

Over 25 ballet teachers, including some of Europe's most outstanding from Austria, England, Eire, France, Holland and Switzerland, went on a special study course in April in Moscow and Leningrad sponsored by the Society. Thanks are due in particular to the USSR-GB Society, to the Soviet personalities of the ballet schools and theatres concerned, and to Joan Lawson who led the party.

School Essay Competition

The prize-giving ceremony was held at the City of Manchester Education Department Offices on 11th May. The Vice-Chairman of the Education Committee, Councillor J. K. Barber, presided and among those present were Lady Simon of Wythenshawe, Vice-President of the Society, Professor J. S. Spink, Vice-Chairman, Dr. K. Laybourn, Manchester's Acting Chief Education Officer, Alderman Mrs. Gladys Lord, J.P., Chairman of the Schools' Sub-Committee and Dr. L. P. de la Perrelle, Headmaster of Manchester Central High School for Boys. The USSR was represented by Mr. A. Borisenko of the Cultural Department of the Soviet Embassy and by Mr. A. Brovchenko, Deputy Editor of Soviet Weekly.

Professor Spink presented the prizes on behalf of the Society and Mr. Borisenko presented the teachers of the first three prize winners with selections of books. The presentation was followed by a Soviet film, *The Music Lesson*, and the proceedings concluded with refreshments. The courtesy and co-operation extended to the Society by the City of Manchester Education Committee was warmly appreciated by everyone concerned and the Society expresses its gratitude for this successful and most pleasant occasion.

In view of the success of the competition it is hoped that a similar one will be arranged next year and that it will become an annual event.

First Prize: We are very pleased to announce that Janet Pollock, the first prize-winner of the School Essay Competition left England on 27th August, for a ten-day free holiday in the Soviet Union as the guest of the USSR-Great Britain Society who kindly offered this prize.

Corrections: In the last issue of the *Journal* Joan S. Coles of Leeds Girls' High School was incorrectly printed as J. S. Coles of Leeds Grammar School.

It is regretted that J. Ledlie of the Methodist College, Belfast, who received an Honourable Mention was, unfortunately, omitted from the report in the last issue of the *Journal*. In view of the particularly fine presentation of his essay it was, in addition to the essays of the first three prize-winners, sent to

Komsomolskaya Pravda in Moscow by their London correspondent, and excerpts from these four essays have now been published in the Soviet Union.

Osipov Balalaika Orchestra

On its first visit to this country in May and June arrangements were made by the Society for a group of the orchestra to visit Birmingham University and Malvern College, Worcestershire. In addition, in association with Martini and Rossi, a reception was held on 4th June at the Martini Terrace, Haymarket, London, S.W.1. British personalities from the music and entertainment world were present together with members of the Theodorakis Ensemble who had just finished their season in London.

Lithuanian Musicians and Singers Visit Thurrock

On their way home from a brief visit to Canada, 38 Lithuanian musicians and singers on board the *Alexander Pushkin* bound for Leningrad, learned that they were to have a seven-hour stop at Tilbury and offered to give a concert free of charge.

Thurrock Urban District Council were approached by the Society and promptly accepted this unexpected offer. The Chairman of the Council immediately published an open invitation to all the residents of Thurrock to the Civic Hall on Sunday, 7th July, for a feast of music.

As a result the Civic Hall was packed to capacity with 750 people sitting and standing in every available space and there were still many people trying to get in when the doors were closed. Music-lovers travelled distances of over 50 miles to hear the hour-long programme. The concert opened with the Sutartine Ensemble of Lithuanian Folk Instruments, followed by Eduardas Kanyava, baritone soloist from the State Academic Theatre of Opera and Ballet, and ending with the Chamber Orchestra of the State Philharmonic Society, considered to be one of the best Chamber Orchestras in the USSR and certainly one of the finest Chamber Ensembles heard in this country.

All the performers were given a tremendous ovation.

After the concert the Soviet Guests were entertained by Councillor Arthur Barnes, J.P., Chairman of Thurrock Urban District Council and by Council members at a civic reception at which the Society was represented by Professor J. S. Spink, Vice-Chairman, and the Secretary.

Their lightning programme went off without a hitch. Before the concert the Lithuanians were taken on a coach tour of the town. They were as impressed with what they saw of Thurrock as the people of Thurrock were with them. Mr. Peter Paget, Tilbury Docks Manager summed it up perfectly: 'It was an unusual occasion, absolutely unexpected and exceptionally enjoyable.' Everyone concerned expressed the fervent wish that this highly successful and delightful visit is the forerunner of further friendly visits and concerts in Thurrock in the future.

Russian Language Courses in the USSR sponsored by the Society

Advanced Language Course, Moscow, August: Over 60 undergraduates participated while another 25, for whom there were no places, went on an over-spill course at Abramtsevo and Dyuny specially arranged by the USSR-GB Society and Intourist at the request of the Society.

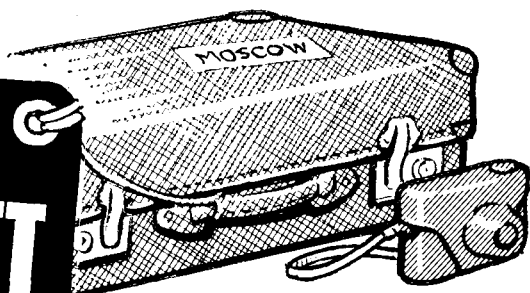
Teachers' Seminar: seven members of the Society took part in the month's seminar at Moscow State University, one withdrawing at the last minute owing to illness.

Ten Months' Scholarship: Bernard Haunch, a member of the Society from Ealing Technical College, was selected by the Committee appointed by the Council to take part in this course. He leaves for Moscow State University this month.

Soviet Exhibition

Two receptions were held at the Paris Pullman Club on 11th and 18th August, for some of the Soviet staff attached to the Exhibition. Many of the Soviet staff were also entertained privately by members on 18th and 25th August.

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Book Reviews

Modern Russian Short Stories: Edited by C. G. Bearne (Macgibbon & Kee, 1968, 30s.)

In this selection Mr. Bearne has brought together some of the best writers in a genre which holds an important place in contemporary Soviet literature. The emphasis is laid, refreshingly in an anthology of this sort, on literary quality rather than political significance, and on the continuity of Soviet and Russian literature; and the result is very successful.

The anthology includes one story by each of the seven authors represented—Aksyonov, Nikolay Chukovsky, Kazakov, Nagibin, Solzhenitsyn, Tendryakov and Zalygin—and brief background notes on the authors and their work. Of these authors, only the oldest, Nikolay Chukovsky, deals with war-time events in his story of the Leningrad siege, *The White Scarf*. The others are of the 'younger generation,' all about the same age as the Revolution itself, and concentrate on everyday themes.

One can disagree with the selection of stories by individual authors. It is a pity that the choice of *Ruts* by Tendryakov, which, both by its length and dramatic intensity differs from the other stories, tends to unbalance the book as a whole. Again, it is unfortunate that Kazakov, whose too often neglected achievement Mr. Bearne rightly stresses, is represented by the brief *At the Railway Halt*, one of Kazakov's early stories which, for all its merits, is not the best nor most representative of Kazakov's works.

Nevertheless, there is no doubt of the rightness of Mr. Bearne's selection as a whole. Through the pleasing variety of styles which emerges through the translations we are made aware of the writers' concentration on themes of everyday human relations on the small scale, of renewed interest in rural life and of the muted, intimate tone in which these themes are dealt with. Very different from the tone struck by young poets such as Voznesensky, the restrained note is nevertheless truly representative of an important trend in contemporary Soviet literature; the experimentation with an individual voice is present here too, though in a less strident way.

Mr. Bearne is to be congratulated for offering translations which make pleasant reading and will serve as a useful introduction for the student to some of the best contemporary Soviet short story writers.

ELIZABETH MACKIE,

University of Birmingham.

Mikhail Sholokhov: A Critical Introduction by D. H. Stewart (University of Michigan Press, *London Representations: Cresset Press*, 1968, 60s.)

Selected Tales from the Don. With an Introduction and Notes by C. G. Bearne, M.A. (Pergamon Press, 1967, 25s.)

Mr. Stewart's stimulating critical introduction comes at an opportune moment when many people in the welter of controversy that now surrounds Soviet writers both in their own country and abroad are apt to forget the significance of Sholokhov's achievement in *The Quiet Don* and *Virgin Soil Upturned*. The examination of these two works from a literary standpoint, relating the former to the classic epics of world literature, particularly the *Iliad*, fills a yawning gap in our appreciation of Sholokhov's writing which is in danger of being obscured by current snippets of news and rumour about the ups and downs at the Writers' Union. Whether or not we agree with Sholokhov's stand on Pasternak and others, we only cheat ourselves if we fail to read and perhaps re-read this saga of the revolution written with the heartblood of a man who was cleft in two by it yet survived to see it whole.

With the insight of the literary historian Mr. Stewart reassembles the past of the Don country and shows us how the 'historical accident' of the socialist revolution inundating the heroic type of society that then still existed among the Don Cossacks could and did produce a true epic just as similar clashes of old and new, given a bard to celebrate them, had done in other periods of history. Tracing Sholokhov's development from his early stories, he reveals the masterly way in which Sholokhov adapted the devices of epic writing to a twentieth-century context. For Sholokhov invocation of the

Gods, for instance, became invocation of Nature. But, says Mr. Stewart, 'It was Walt Whitman who equated men with blades of grass, not Sholokhov. He does not say that Grigory is like grass. They have only generation and mortality in common. Unlike grass a man goes questing for his fate, which is determined by his time and place in history. Thus history supplants the gods in *The Quiet Don* and eclipses the hero as the driving force of the book—as is proper in the epic where the hero's greatness emerges only as he resists 'divine' or in this case "historical" necessity. Mr. Stewart goes on to point out that Sholokhov "... never insults humanity; he never, despite his detachment in the final parts of *The Quiet Don*, becomes so impersonal and inhuman that he fails to distinguish humanity's high place in the order of things ... Sholokhov's world belongs to man and man shall pay for it. Not "original sin" but social sin, prompted by instinct and environment, is the pit into which man falls and from which he must extricate himself.'

While he concentrates our attention on this element of necessity and its ramifications in Sholokhov's writing, Mr. Stewart is excellent. It is a pity, therefore, that in subsequent chapters he does not quite rise to an appreciation of the sheer necessity for the Russian people, including the Cossacks, to make their life better and does not fully credit Sholokhov himself with a reasoned acceptance of the need for the Soviet system and the need to lend it his wholehearted support, which last he invariably treats in his account of Sholokhov's career as a kind of trimming to Party demands. In fact, the dangers Sholokhov ran in the early thirties, when he was completing the Don cycle, were even graver than Mr. Stewart relates; as the Soviet critic Yakimenko has written, an attempt was actually made to frame Sholokhov as an instigator of counter-revolution and he was only saved by the man, an ex-partisan, who had been selected by the local NKVD for the role of provocateur. I believe that the tremendous grit and fighting power that Sholokhov displayed in those days was sustained by a very real faith in the necessity for a communist form of society and this sincerity partly explains his present lack of toleration.

Though Mr. Stewart gives us an enlightening account in the appendix of how Sholokhov's books have reached us in English, he is rather lenient to the English and American publishers who

continue to issue *And Quiet Flows the Don* with cuts, as he himself says, amounting to 25 per cent of the original text. But we should be grateful to him not only for his literary insights but for the careful collation of so many facts and opinions about a major figure in literature that have not hitherto been available.

It is encouraging to see that much is being done by such publishers as Pergamon and Collets to make available annotated Russian texts from which an increasing number of scholars can judge Russian writing for themselves in the original. Mr. Bearne's introduction to *Selected Tales from the Don* by Sholokhov is lucid and helpful. It draws attention to many aspects of the writer's style that might otherwise escape the student and, unlike some other Pergamon introductions, is blessedly free of political prejudice. The vocabulary and notes, however, strike me as not quite adequate and I feel that too much reliance is placed on the student's ability to guess corrupted forms such as 'suprotiv' (for 'protiv') and 'smal'stva' (p.81) for the rather rare 'sysmal'stva' (from childhood), neither of which appear in the vocabulary. There are also some slips. 'Likhomanka' (evil) appears as 'evil-doer' and the dialectal 'navrodye' for some reason is given in the vocabulary with a soft sign while appearing in the text (p.89) in its correct dialectal form.

ROBERT DAGLISH.

Maria Cvetaeva. Her Life and Art by Simon Karlinsky (University of California Press, 1966, 69s.)

After many years of neglect Tsvetaeva's poetry has been recently gaining in popularity among Russian readers. (The author adopts throughout a less conventional transliteration of Russian words based on Czech usage, hence Cvetaeva). As a poet Tsvetaeva is laconic, complex and difficult, but, of course, wonderfully rewarding. She uses fully all classical and modern techniques; the orchestration is full and varied. Moreover, the work is often intensely personal calling for biographical knowledge. A book on her life and work is, therefore, not only helpful but indispensable. The present one is an expanded version of Karlinsky's earlier academic thesis submitted at the University of California. It contains a great deal of useful information, particularly the parts on Tsvetaeva's prosody and

the bibliography. The validity of the biographical part is, however, questionable. The book was written before much Soviet material on Tsvetayeva became available and the author relied chiefly on emigré publications and interviews of individuals who know or claim to have known Tsvetayeva either before the Revolution or during her dismal exile in Prague and Paris. The book is, of course, full of anti-Soviet bias and this is not surprising since one of the author's acknowledged mentors is Gleb Struve, who is well known for his hatred of the Soviet Union and exploitation of ostensibly academic publications as a vehicle for crude anti-Soviet propaganda. Some recent Soviet publications such as, for example, the biographical notes of Tsvetayeva's sister, A. Meyn in *Novii Mir* of 1966, have already invalidated many of Karlinsky's statements.

In her tragic age Tsvetayeva's life was even more disastrous than that of most of her countrymen and it is easy to gloat over such events and exploit them politically. Nevertheless, the book is probably still the only major source on Tsvetayeva in English and will have to do until a better one is printed.

Dr. L. CROME.

Era of the Russian Ballet. 1770-1965.

By Natalia Roslavleva with a foreword by Dame Ninette de Valois and 100 photographs. (Gollancz, 1966, 45s.)

Natalia Roslavleva is one of the most erudite of Soviet ballet critics as well as being one of the most delightful and helpful of colleagues to writers on ballet in many other countries. Her command over the technicalities of dance as well as the history of ballet has become almost a legend so that the publication of her *Era of the Russian Ballet* has put her foreign correspondents and, it is to be hoped, every ballet lover deeply into her debt.

Her book has long been needed for no adequate history of Russian Ballet has ever been published outside the USSR. It covers a vast field and is so varied in its knowledge. It is also remarkable for its command over the English language, for it is not a translation but was written in the author's second language, in which she acquired such proficiency through acting as interpreter to English-speaking war correspondents after first gaining a degree at Moscow University, where a

study of Shakespeare had been her first choice of subject. Perhaps her command of English is also not surprising for another of her feats was to write a History of our own Royal Ballet for Soviet audiences before she had ever seen them dance. This is a book which I, as a historian myself, would hesitate to fault.

Ballet has had a longer life in Russia than anywhere else except Paris, but, unlike many authors on the subject of ballet history, Natalia Roslavleva immediately places into proper focus the part the native folk dance and its performers have always played in the development of those specific qualities, expressions and style that the world recognises as belonging to dancers from no other country. Realising however that until the beginning of the 20th century foreign choreographers, teachers and dancers played a major part in creating its particular school and repertoire, the author correctly balances the give and take between native born and foreign artists and thus helps the reader to understand how much the art of ballet everywhere owes to the friendly collaboration between peoples of many nations.

Another important aspect of this most valuable book is the knowledge it gives of the social structure of the various audiences and the influence they had and still have on the creators of schools, repertoires and companies. This side of the book also brings into view the powerful part played by the Imperial Treasury, political factions and/or fashionable balletomanes, all eager to dictate to or have some hand in the art that has always been Russia's glory. In these parts of her book the author reveals the differing reactions of the various dancers and ballet-masters to this outside dictation and stresses how the integrity of certain artists saved the ballet from complete disintegration during bad periods, even though their own withdrawal from the scene in Moscow or St. Petersburg did from time to time weaken the development of Russian as opposed to International ballet.

Perhaps the greatest feature of Natalia Roslavleva's book is her ability to weave the many varied threads of her history into a most readable whole. So often histories of any art seem to be compiled of dry-as-dust facts, dates and names with few links between save only in the cross references in the Index. From the moment the story begins with the dis-

covery of the 6th century silver figurines of dancing men found near Kiev to the Serf ballerinas, whose portraits are among the beauties still found in the famous Sheremetiev Serf Theatre just outside Moscow, and on to the latest ballets, particularly 'The Geologists,' by the young Soviet choreographers Natalia Kasatkina and her husband, Vladimir Vasilyov, Natalia Roslavleva gives all the salient details making that one ballet, that one school, dancer, ballet-master and pauses on her way to elucidate all those other persons and factors which made their production or training possible within the given circumstances of that particular period.

Such a book is not easy to review in a short article. Any reader of this brief note, if a lover of Soviet ballet, must needs read this valuable record for themselves and realise how the art of Russian Ballet, once thought to be the exclusive property of the court, was and is still the property of all the Russian peoples. For all the foreign artists who came to create, perform and mould the Russian ballet, fell in love with the native dancers, their natural lyricism, expressively emotional qualities and technical facility and in so doing made an art which is now practised in over 19 major choreographic schools and well over 30 Theatres of Opera and Ballet, to say nothing of the many theatres of operetta, musical comedy and others where dancers play an important part in the entertainment offered. However, as Natalia Roslavleva herself would say, her book is only part of a continuous history and is only complete up to the date she finished her MSS. Since that moment Soviet ballet and its many Folk dance groups have continued to develop, throwing up new ideas, dancers and all those other artists without whom it cannot live. As each new Theatre of Opera and Ballet develops its own stars, so they in turn come to give to the others, and the two oldest of them, the Kirov and the Bolshoi, as well as giving of dancers and ballets, are now receiving in their turn new ideas, dancers, musicians and artists from other places in their effort to show the art of the Russian classical dancers in yet another fresh angle. Roslavleva shows how this was done in the past; she also indicates how it has to be done in the future.

JOAN LAWSON,

Royal Ballet School.

The Soviet Union: 'A' Level (New Certificate) Geography Series by G. Melvyn Howe. 9" x 5½", 416 pp., 230 illustrations (half-tone and line) (Macdonald & Evans Ltd., London, 1967, 32s. 6d.)

The 'Cold War' seems to have inhibited the teaching and study of the geography of the USSR to such an extent that its effects are apparent even today in the ignorance of students admitted to colleges and departments of education—the teachers of the future. One wonders if the effect that this must have had on the attitudes of our politicians in their conduct of foreign affairs in the past is to be perpetuated by yet another generation of teachers.

In recent years, some British geographers, notably Cole and German, appear to believe that they are called upon to express views on Marxist philosophy and to make a fetish of statistics, primarily to cast doubt upon numerous aspects of Soviet economic progress. Geographers can write about Spain and Portugal, or Asian countries such as Thailand and Malaya without reference to their political régimes, corruption, neo-colonialism or the validity of official statistics, and produce useful textbooks. Why, then, have British authors failed for so long to produce an objective systematic account of the geography of the USSR?

It is encouraging to find at last a study of the Soviet Union that in the main does exactly what it sets out to do, to provide a systematic geography for sixth forms, colleges of education and first-year university students. It is the kind of book that has always been available for the study of every other major country. Professor Howe shows clearly what should have been obvious long ago, that since the 1930s Soviet geographers have provided enough reliable material from which to compile a useful and generally accurate textbook for British students. In fact one suspects that it is because of the abundance of material at his disposal, that the author has had to present much of that part of his book dealing with the USSR as a whole in the form of maps and a series of carefully chosen photographs, with the minimum of text. This is hardly a defect as the maps are well drawn, and exercises at the end of the chapters set the student the task of examining and correlating the material contained in these illustrations, while the text has been enlivened to some extent by

the inclusion of literary quotations from Russian authors. This feature of the book would be of greater value if it contained extracts from the works of modern authors.

Unlike most recent publications on the Soviet Union, Professor Howe's book not only studies the USSR as a whole, but gives a systematic description of each of the economic regions. Unfortunately he treats the factors of natural environment separately from economic development in each region, instead of showing to what extent one is a reflection of the other. This appears to be due to his acceptance of the concept that 'man-land relationships . . . normally adopted by western geographers for purposes of regionalisation, cannot readily be applied, since the pattern of human geography in the USSR is to a high degree a reflection of the prevailing planned economic activity.'

This is a curiously uncritical acceptance of the thesis advanced by some Soviet geographers (e.g. P. Alampiev: *Economic Areas in the USSR*, Moscow 1966) that in capitalist (but not in socialist) societies, scientists can only 'note the existence of areas, describe them, but cannot intervene in the process of their development.' This might be true in a completely *laissez-faire* capitalist society, but in fact in every economically advanced capitalist state, government planning and intervention is constantly at work, even though it is greatly impeded by restrictions inherent in capitalist society. Moreover, no matter to what extent the economy is planned, the planners simply cannot ignore the geographical factors of natural environment. The pattern of their distribution and relation to human geography and economic development, can be seen in every country in the world.

It is of course understandable that in a country such as the USSR, with great achievements to its credit and inspired by a desire to create an entirely new type of society, Man's positive role and ability to change Nature should be constantly stressed. But one has not to travel far in the Soviet Union to realise that major features of landscape, climate, soils etc. still exert their influence on Russian activities and attitudes.

In any case, the subdivisions of the major economic regions used in practice for Soviet planning do reflect the interaction between primary 'natural' factors and the secondary Man-made factors which are imposed upon the

natural landscape. It is this interaction which provides the basis for the study of Human Geography, neglected for many years in the Soviet Union because of preoccupation during the Stalin period with what were often somewhat sterile accounts of economic facts and achievements.

Perhaps, however, Professor Howe was not inhibited so much by the attitude of certain Soviet geographers as by his publishers, for a complete geographical analysis of each of the regions, of which he offers the reader a concise description, would certainly enlarge his book to such an extent as to price it out of the reach of most students. But if lack of space was an important consideration, why spoil what is otherwise an objective systematic geography with a final chapter on Soviet economic progress based mainly on the works of Alec Nove? This chapter is devoid of the scholarship that makes the rest of the book so admirable. It begins with the statement that 'statistics suggest that the rapid advance has been made merely in material production rather than in any overall improvement in the living standard of the population.' This is quite untrue as I know from my own visits to the Soviet Union in the 1930's and in 1960, 1965 and 1968. In fact Professor Howe contradicts his own statement in the last sentence of his book: 'It appears that the Soviet government is now committed to a consumer-orientated economy and that the new society that has emerged in the Soviet Union, the product of Soviet technical and economic evolution, is destined to enjoy an improvement in living standards denied to earlier generations in that country.' If the author wishes to make these kinds of value judgments, which we would suggest are out of place in an otherwise excellent systematic geographical textbook, then surely he should explain that this is what Communism is all about, the establishment of priorities to attain socially desirable goals.

JAMES S. GREGORY.
Furzedown College.

(Author of the latest book on the USSR, *Russian Land, Soviet People*, published by Harrap, and to be reviewed in our next issue.)

Religion in the USSR. Robert Conquest (Editor). (Bodley Head, London, 1968, 135 pp., 21s.)

This book outlines the legal position of

the Church in the USSR from the time of the Revolution to the present day. It is mainly concerned with the Russian Orthodox Church, but it also has sections on Catholicism, Protestantism, Judaism and Buddhism. Its merit is a large number of references to Soviet works on religion, on the other hand, many Western 'standards'—such as Kolarz—are not cited in the bibliography, making it less useful than it might be for teachers and students. Its interpretation stresses the relationship between church and state and the persecution of the former by the latter.

DAVID LANE.

Industrial Workers in the USSR. Robert Conquest (Editor) (Bodley Head, London, 1967, 30s.)

After a brief introduction, the authors of this book provide considerable factual information about wages, conditions of work and trade unions in Russia from the Revolution to the present day. The facts are backed up by detailed references (191 in Chapter 1 alone) to Soviet publications. This wealth of information makes interesting reading. It is just a little unfortunate, however, that some of the conclusions are not fully justified by the text. Readers of the journal will be surprised to read, for example, that in the USSR 'on balance (the workers' standard of living) seems unlikely to be greatly better than it was in 1928, before the industrialisation drive started' (p. 88.)

DAVID LANE.

Soviet Nationalities Policy in Practice. Robert Conquest (Editor) (Bodley Head, London, 1967, 25s.)

This book surveys the problem of nationalities from pre-revolutionary Bolshevik theory to the present position of the Union Republics. It has chapters on 'The Formation of the USSR', 'The First Years of Soviet Rule (1920-1930)', and 'The Creation of Soviet Nations.' Though the chapters are short, many Russian sources are cited which might be useful for the researcher and student.

DAVID LANE,
University of Essex.

Moscow. Tourist Guide, Ivan Myachin and Vladimir Chernov (Novosti Press Agency Publishing House, Moscow, 25s.)



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BY APPOINTMENT TO
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Around the Kremlin. Several Authors.
Translated by Bernard Meares (Progress Publishers, Moscow, 30s.)

A Motorist's Guide to the Soviet Union.
V. E. and J. M. Louis (Pergamon, 84s.)

A guide is something to help a traveller when he is travelling. It should be light in weight, economic in price and words. A brochure exists to persuade the potential traveller that the place to be visited is worth visiting, and may use all persuasive devices to this end. The guide takes over once the brochure has persuaded.

This distinction alas is seldom made in Soviet guides. In the Novosti publication, *Moscow*, the resources of a Paris printer—good colour film, the cheaper offset printing process, and a pleasing typeface (in this case Helvetica), have been squandered. The seriously-written, historically based account of the structure of Moscow is constantly and irritatingly broken up by photographic 'études' of autumn leaves, children with dolls, lovers on park benches and the predictable rest. Even then all is not well. On pp. 30-31 a photograph which purports to be of the Nagatino residential area turns out to be from the roof of the Ukraine Hotel seven miles away. An obvious Petrov-Vodkin on pp. 216-217 is uncaptioned. This is a great pity because the text (including the use of old prints) gives the best description of the city I have yet seen in a Soviet Guide.

Around the Kremlin is more sedate. The absence of coffee-table Snowdonia would, however have been more welcome had the colour work been better done. The lack of clarity in the illustrations is due here to an assortment of errors. In one colour plate indeed a whole colour has been omitted, a black-and-white of the Kutafya Tower is actually out-of-focus; in general the black-and-white vary enormously in intensity, possibly due to inking techniques, and the colours made too garish and unreal. There is also a duplication in two sheets of the illustrations to the Armoury. The pleasant design of the binding leads us to expect something better, and the straightforwardness of the writing certainly deserves it.

The Motorists' Guide is the most efficient of all, and so it should be at Pergamon prices. It is designed for the urgent traveller. Every routed town has its pocket description, historical vignette, and an account of services. There is a separate folder of route and town maps. The Motorists' phrase book looks like being actually useful instead of being like a *New Statesman* competition. There is also (Soviet publishers please note) an index, and there are no pretty pictures. It is invaluable for the motorist, and possibly more importantly, an (albeit expensive) object lesson for native publishers.

RICHARD COOK.

Czechoslovakia

Since the Soviet Union's intervention in Czechoslovakia with other members of the Warsaw Pact occurred when the printing of this number of the Journal was almost completed, the following two items had to be placed at the end; otherwise the release of the Journal would have been delayed.

In times of crisis it is impossible to keep up with rapidly changing events which, one hopes will be for the better. Some of the points raised below, therefore, may have lost their relevancy by the time this reaches members and the public.

EDITOR'S STATEMENT

Whatever people may feel about Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia, the suggestion that trade and cultural relations be severed as a form of protest is, we believe, a very dangerous proposition.

In our view such a policy is not only unrealistic but negative. In the interests of the British, Soviet and Czech people it is imperative that the development of such relations be maintained. Both the British and Soviet people have benefited from the increase in trade; from the growth of exchanges and contacts; from the study of each others language, history and culture.

Such a course, however, is not only of mutual advantage to the British and Soviet people. It is also one of the few ways towards a broader understanding by which the policies of states can be influenced to the benefit of all.

SHOULD TRADE AND CULTURAL RELATIONS WITH THE USSR BE MAINTAINED?

A review of a BBC "24 Hours" broadcast

To boycott or not to boycott was the theme of an emotionally charged "Twenty-Four Hours" on August 23rd, in the middle of the Czech crisis.

Michael Barratt introduced the programme, commenting on a film sequence in which Rostropovitch performed a Czech concerto in London while Russian tanks occupied Prague.

Twelve people took part in the discussion including our editor, two members of Parliament, two students, three sports representatives, a university professor and a writer, a trade union general secretary and a somewhat hysterical Hungarian. Mr. Patek, the Czechoslovak Charge d'Affaires, was also present and expressed his deepest gratitude for the support of the British people.

Robert McKenzie, in the chair, recalled that the last time he had met Ian Mikardo was when he himself was lecturing at Moscow University.

Perhaps Ian Mikardo made the most telling point when he said: "We have got to think of it in the long term and not just have a momentary reaction." The opening scenes of the programme bore this out. To see and hear Rostropovitch's impassioned rendering of Dvorjak's Cello Concerto while foreign tanks crept through the streets of Prague was not simply clever and artistic camera work or even heightened drama to evoke impulsive responses. It seemed to strike at the very heart of the tragedy as well as of the particular aspect of the problem under discussion. The surprise of the Russian tank crews at not being the expected liberators; the Czechs telling them so, clambering on the tanks, pushing leaflets inside, hanging flags and posters on the silent guns; and here in London the few demonstrators in the Albert Hall, hushed as much by the intensity of Rostropovitch's performance as by the audience whose acclamation brought tears to his eyes—an occasion charged with political undertones. Bewilderment, frustration, indignation; but also—communication. Czech to soldier; 'cellist to composer; audience to player.

That sort of communication might lead to changes for the better—at least ultimately, even through the disillusionment of the Russian soldier and its repercussions back home. But what can we in Britain do? asked Michael Barratt and Robert McKenzie. Ought we to carry on trade, sport and cultural relations with the USSR? Or would the end of such communication bring the Soviet government more quickly to its senses? The arguments for and against, said Robert McKenzie, seemed to him equally powerful on both sides.

As the discussion developed it became increasingly clear how difficult it was to generalise. It would be unrealistic, for example, said Ian Mikardo, if an attempt were made to stop all trade with the USSR. "You see, we are not selling ball-point pens and women's undies and you can just say we'll stop this month's delivery and sell them to somebody else. Nearly all our sales are of complete plants, highly technically developed specially for the customer—the sort of thing that takes a year or two to negotiate; two to three years to design and manufacture; three or four years to erect and put into service, and you're in the middle of that all the time. A British company couldn't break off that without breaking contractual obligations and without enormous losses to itself." It depends, he went on to say, on the individual businessman and the type of trade in which

he is engaged as to whether he can or should discriminate against the Soviet Union.

Regarding sport the Secretary of the British Olympic Association said that, as a non-political body, they were still going ahead with their arrangements and sending the British team to Mexico City; that the Games are controlled by the Olympic rules and that, to the best of his knowledge, the Soviet Olympic Committee had not broken any rules and certainly didn't control the Soviet government. He admitted, however, that independently arranged games between two states (Glasgow Celtic, for example, had just cancelled its match in Budapest) presented a more difficult problem.

Tariq Ali, on this occasion brought some sense of proportion to the discussion by saying that if Britain was to make any moral gestures—which he thought scarcely befitted it while Michael Stewart was talking about the defence of small nations but supporting American aggression in Vietnam—the first gesture should be the repudiation of the Munich Treaty which the British government had constantly refused to do despite repeated Czech requests. Indeed, it appears that none of the main political parties are advocating (as yet, at any rate, as we go to press) the breaking of trade and cultural links with the Soviet Union. Any such measures, apart from the unlikelihood of their efficacy or the difficulty in operating them, could also be used against us or America for pursuing policies which, as Tariq Ali said, are just as, or even more, aggressive. After all, the Soviet people have as much grounds in their view for demanding similar boycotts against us because of our government's Rhodesian policy or support for American intervention in Vietnam, as our people have over Czechoslovakia. This doesn't mean that either policy is right, or that nothing should be done. It does mean, however, that communication between the British and Soviet people is of even greater importance if such policies are to be changed.

Eldon Griffiths, Conservative M.P. for Bury St. Edmunds, made no comment on this point, but seemed to have somewhat modified the views he had earlier expressed in the *Times* when he singled out the Soviet Union. In the programme he stated: "I can see very little to be said really for cutting ourselves off from the Soviet Union because we've got to hope that western influence will try to bring a more liberal climate in the Soviet Union."

The most pertinent part of the discussion for our own Society was when Robert McKenzie asked Professor Erikson of Edinburgh University what effect he thought it would have if Britain did any of the things suggested. Was, for example, the Soviet Union particularly sensitive to such acts?

"Well, yes, I think they are," replied Professor Erikson, "but I would like to make one point if I may—just in my own area, that is—the contacts I have with Soviet scholars. I'm well aware of the fact, by the way, that any kind of intellectual traffic might be construed as an intellectual collaboration. And, as you said yourself, this is a personal decision. But there is another point as well. This has happened—the invasion of Czechoslovakia which is a brutal and crude thing. But at the same time I cannot myself think, and I am speaking personally now, that Leonid Brezhnev represents Russia and the Soviet Union. The Brezhnevs come and the Brezhnevs go. And behind him and beside him and alongside him are people of the same age and somewhat younger than myself whom, I hope, at sometime will take over the ruling positions in the Soviet Union."

“Can that be promoted in any way from outside?” asked McKenzie.

“Yes,” replied Erikson, “I think it would be folly actually—it would be absolute folly, bearing in mind the danger that one runs, simply to axe this away completely. I think we’ve got to keep what links we have; that they should read our material, listen to our criticisms, consider our arguments. This is one absolutely vital lifeline which we must keep going. For they depend on it—and so do we, by the way.”

Our own editor underlined the last point when he said how much our own scholars suffered from ignorance of the work being done by Soviet researchers, especially in Asian and African studies. As long as there was a genuine two-way traffic in ideas, information and research it was vital to maintain such contacts. And although Robert Conquest intervened by asserting that all the Soviet intellectuals who came to Britain were sponsored by the Soviet government and its political apologists, he failed to mention Aksyonov and Tendryakov’s visit last year, or other examples of known avant-gardes, in addition to the lesser known scholars studying here to whom Professor Erikson referred. Indeed, the two surveys of studies in Britain and in the USSR published in this number only emphasise the point that, in the two-way traffic, we have more to lose than the USSR, and that such traffic in no way strengthens intellectual collaboration in the misguided or irresponsible policies of either state.

Yet it may be, as was advanced in the discussion, that certain forms of boycott (which do not interfere with the exchange of ideas, information and research) can, to some extent, be effective. For instance, Tom Jackson, General Secretary of the Post Office Workers, upheld his Union’s decision to cancel a Soviet invitation. It’s difficult, however, to know in a case like this whether boycott is better than contact.

Clearly any non-political organisation in Britain which is exclusively concerned with some form of relations with the USSR, such as the Russo-British Chamber of Commerce or our own Society, may appear to some at a time like this to be implicitly condoning Soviet action. Nevertheless, in maintaining cultural relations I do feel that we are not jeopardising the interests and goodwill of the Czechoslovak people. On the contrary, the arguments of Maurice Hookham and Professor Erikson show that such a course is more likely to help than to hinder. In Erikson’s words: “This is one absolutely vital life-line which we must keep going.”

TREVOR TAYLOR.

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